

THE BLUE AND THE GRAY



ONLY LAND

BY

OVER
OFTIC

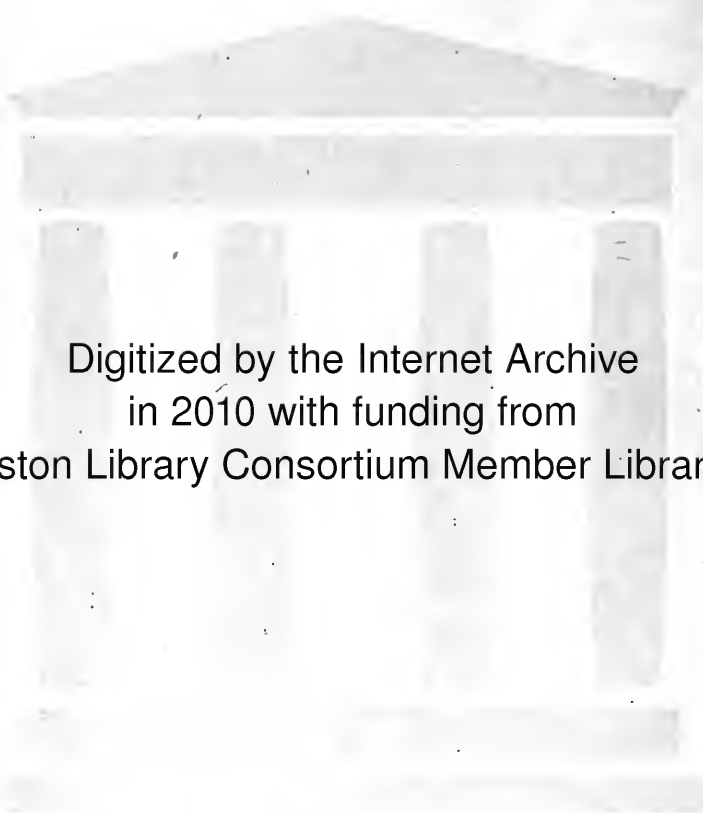


ON THE STAFF









Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
Boston Library Consortium Member Libraries

<http://www.archive.org/details/onstaff00opti>



THE BLUE AND THE GRAY—AFLOAT

Two colors cloth Emblematic Dies Illustrated
Price per volume \$1.50

TAKEN BY THE ENEMY
WITHIN THE ENEMY'S LINES
ON THE BLOCKADE
STAND BY THE UNION
FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHT
A VICTORIOUS UNION

THE BLUE AND THE GRAY—ON LAND

Two colors cloth Emblematic Dies Illustrated
Price per volume \$1.50

BROTHER AGAINST BROTHER
IN THE SADDLE
A LIEUTENANT AT EIGHTEEN
ON THE STAFF

(Other volumes in preparation)

ANY VOLUME SOLD SEPARATELY.

LEE AND SHEPARD PUBLISHERS BOSTON



“ ‘Company — Attention!’ shouted Deck.”

Page 404.

The BLUE AND THE GRAY SERIES



BY OLIVER OPTIC

ON THE STAFF

The Blue and the Gray on Land

ON THE STAFF

BY

OLIVER OPTIC

AUTHOR OF "THE ARMY AND NAVY SERIES" "YOUNG AMERICA ABROAD, FIRST
AND SECOND SERIES" "THE BOAT-CLUB STORIES" "THE GREAT WESTERN
SERIES" "THE WOODVILLE STORIES" "THE ONWARD AND UPWARD
SERIES" "THE LAKE SHORE SERIES" "THE YACHT-CLUB SERIES"
"THE RIVERDALE STORIES" "THE BOAT-BUILDER SERIES"
"THE BLUE AND THE GRAY — AFLOAT" "A MISSING
MILLION" "A MILLIONAIRE AT SIXTEEN" "A YOUNG
KNIGHT-ERRANT" "STRANGE SIGHTS ABROAD"
"THE YOUNG NAVIGATORS" "UP AND DOWN
THE NILE" "ASIATIC BREEZES" "ACROSS
INDIA" "HALF ROUND THE WORLD"
ETC., ETC., ETC., ETC., ETC.

BOSTON
LEE AND SHEPARD PUBLISHERS
10 MILK STREET
1897

COPYRIGHT, 1896, BY LEE AND SHEPARD

All Rights Reserved

ON THE STAFF

TYPOGRAPHY BY C. J. PETERS & SON, BOSTON.

PRESSWORK BY BERWICK & SMITH.

TO

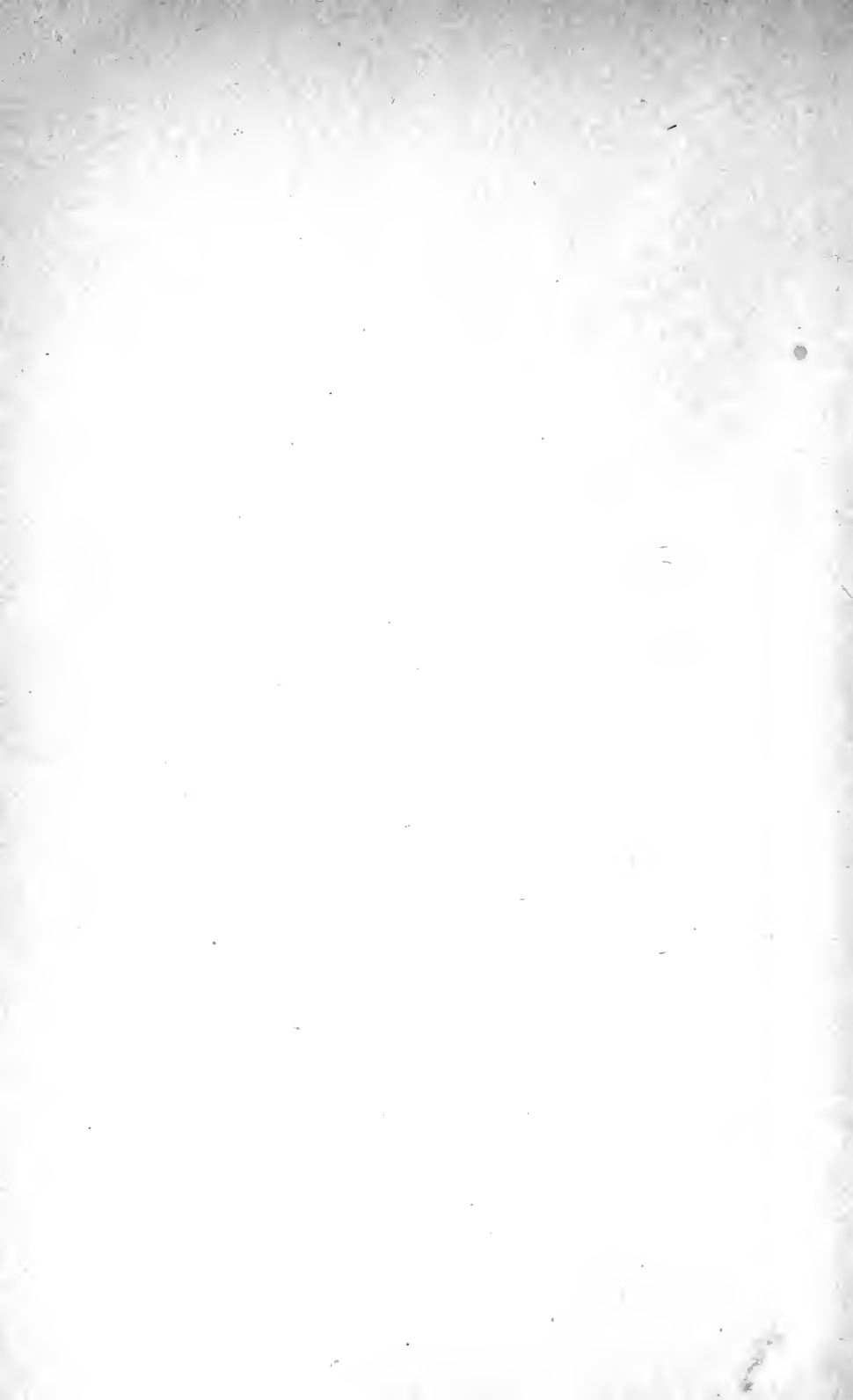
MY FRIEND AND FELLOW-MEMBER OF
THE BOSTON CLUB

SAMUEL W. CREECH, JR., ESQUIRE

WHO, IN LOOKING OUT FOR HIMSELF,
ALWAYS LOOKS OUT FOR ME,

This Volume

IS RESPECTFULLY AND GRATEFULLY
DEDICATED.



LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

“ ‘COMPANY — ATTENTION!’ SHOUTED DECK ” *Frontispiece*

ILLUSTRATED TITLE

PAGE

“THE TROOPERS POINTED THEIR REVOLVERS AT
THEIR HEADS” 58

“DECK HAD HIS REVOLVER IN HIS HAND” 118

“‘I AM HIT, CORPORAL; BUT STAY WHERE YOU ARE’ ” 152

“‘GOOD-MORNING, MY SON,’ SAID MAJOR LYON ” . 200

“THE FIGHT BEHIND THE LOGS LASTED HARDLY MORE
THAN A MINUTE” 289

“CAPTAIN LYON WAS INVITED INTO THE TENT ” . . 338

PREFACE

“ON THE STAFF” is the fourth of the series of “The Blue and the Gray — on Land.” Like its predecessors, it takes the reader back to the stirring events of the War of the Rebellion, thirty-five years ago, before the birth of a majority of the readers of this volume. The writer was in middle age then; and though not a participant in the bloody events of that time, he was one of those who assisted at home in fighting the battles for the preservation of the Union, and who, though not entitled to the honor and glory of those who fought its battles in the field, and actually won the re-unification of the States, were not without a mission in carrying forward the cause in which the soldiers and sailors were the actual workers.

It is not necessary here to review the part taken in the war by the “stay-at-homes,” who were behind the army and navy, and out of per-

sonal danger, but supported and encouraged those in the field and on the sea, and to this extent were engaged in the terrible struggle. The noble and patriotic men in Washington and elsewhere who originated and managed the financial system of the nation, which made it possible to carry on the war to a successful issue, though they did not bare their bosoms to the bullets of the enemy, were as truly elements of the happy result of the war as the soldiers and sailors fighting under the flag.

It was shown in the Preface of the preceding volume of this series, that the age, the arm of the service, and the rank of the hero of the events narrated, were not even novel in the experience of the time, as proved by the official records of the States which sent soldiers to the front. Though Deck Lyon, in the last part of this book, wears the shoulder-straps of a captain, he is still "on the staff." He has grown somewhat older, and his character and ability have been considerably developed; and he is given the lead in sundry expeditions on shore and on the great river, and proves himself to be as able in council as in wielding his sabre.

Deck is highly appreciated by the general in command of his brigade, and even by the one in command of his division, which may account for his rapid promotions, though they have been made as much on his merits as by favor. Still his latest rank, as given in this volume, was not exceptional in the army of the Union. As a captain on the staff of the general he was several times placed in command of a company, and fought in this capacity in several actions, including the tremendous battle of Pittsburg Landing.

The condition of Kentucky in the early years of the war has been fully described in the preceding volumes of the series, and it had only temporarily improved when the Army of the Ohio was sent from the State to re-enforce General Grant on the Tennessee. Guerilla raids, and those of foragers from the ranks of the enemy, were still prevalent; and the first part of the book relates to some of these which the hero was employed in defeating, as well as a few lively skirmishes on the river. His limited experience with boats on Green River and the creek that flowed through his father's plantation made him more proficient

in handling boats than most of the soldiers of an interior State; and he had a natural inclination in that direction, as most boys have. This knowledge, small as it was, made him very useful at times, especially after a steam-launch had been captured by the force to which he belonged.

His duty did not confine him to such comparatively insignificant affairs; for he marched with the fourth division of the Army of the Ohio, under the command of General Buell, and rendered essential assistance in a boat at the fording of Duck River, which enabled General Nelson to take part in the battle of Pittsburg Landing on the first day, as well as the second, of that bloody engagement. He marched with his division to the intrenchments around Corinth, and was in a heavy skirmish even while General Beauregard was sending away his munitions and supplies, and from whence stole off with his army the same night.

With my hearty thanks to the readers who have appreciated and encouraged me in my work for over forty years, I can only hope that this book will please them.

WILLIAM T. ADAMS.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I.	PAGE
A SUSPICIOUS STEAMER IN SIGHT	15
CHAPTER II.	
THE SUGGESTION OF LIEUTENANT LYON	28
CHAPTER III.	
THE HARBINGER FIRES THE FIRST GUNS	41
CHAPTER IV.	
THE FIGHT ON BOARD THE STEAMER	54
CHAPTER V.	
A DESPERATE ACTION IN THE TOWN	67
CHAPTER VI.	
THE THOROUGH DEFEAT OF THE ENEMY	79
CHAPTER VII.	
A VERY RHEUMATIC PATIENT	92
CHAPTER VIII.	
ON BOARD OF THE CAPTURED LAUNCH	104

CHAPTER IX.		PAGE
THE NEW MOON RISES ON THE HIPSY		116
CHAPTER X.		
THE LAUNCH IN A TIGHT PLACE		129
CHAPTER XI.		
AN IMPENDING BATTLE ON THE RIVER		141
CHAPTER XII.		
CANNON-BALLS FLYING IN THE AIR		154
CHAPTER XIII.		
THE STEAMER BATTLE ON THE RIVER		167
CHAPTER XIV.		
THE DESTRUCTION OF THE NEW MOON		180
CHAPTER XV.		
AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE GENERAL		193
CHAPTER XVI.		
REVIEW OF THE SITUATION IN KENTUCKY		206
CHAPTER XVII.		
AN EXPEDITION UP THE CUMBERLAND		219
CHAPTER XVIII.		
THE HIPSY UNDER FIRE AGAIN		232
CHAPTER XIX.		
THE END OF THE AFFAIR WITH THE FLAT		245
CHAPTER XX.		
IN THE PRESENCE OF A GREAT COMMANDER		257

CONTENTS 13

CHAPTER XXI. PAGE

ANOTHER TRIP UP THE CUMBERLAND 269

CHAPTER XXII.

DECK FINDS THE RIVER BLOCKADED 282

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE RESULT OF THE FIGHT ON THE RAFT 295

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE BEGINNING OF THE GREAT MOVEMENT 307

CHAPTER XXV.

THE FIGHT AT CUFFY'S FERRY 320

CHAPTER XXVI.

CAPTAIN DEXTER LYON OF THE STAFF 332

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE LONG DELAY AT DUCK RIVER BRIDGE 345

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AN UP-RIVER ENTERPRISE PROJECTED 358

CHAPTER XXIX.

A SUCCESSFUL MISSION UP THE STREAM 370

CHAPTER XXX.

THE GENERAL'S HURRIED MARCH 383

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE FIRST DAY AT PITTSBURG LANDING 395

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE FINAL RESULT OF THE GREAT BATTLE 408

CHAPTER XXXIII.		PAGE
CAPTAIN LYON MAKES A SCOUTING-TOUR		421
CHAPTER XXXIV.		
A HEAVY SKIRMISH ON THE ROAD		434
CHAPTER XXXV.		
A CONCEALED FORCE UNDER THE RIDGE		447
CHAPTER XXXVI.		
THE LAST ENGAGEMENT AT CORINTH		460

ON THE STAFF

CHAPTER I

A SUSPICIOUS STEAMER IN SIGHT

“WHAT are you looking at, Deck?” asked Lieutenant Frank Herndon, as both of them stood on a little eminence just outside of the considerable town of Barkville, on the Cumberland River, not more than a dozen miles from the boundary line between Kentucky and Tennessee.

“This river is so crooked, that in following it five miles a fellow would get tied up into a hard knot,” replied Lieutenant Lyon, who had just been promoted to the rank of first lieutenant, and placed on the staff of Brigadier-General Woodbine, as had also his companion on the hill. “It was a great mistake on the part of

the maker of my field-glass that he did not build it so that I could see around a corner with it."

"Perhaps that would have made it convenient for some occasions, but it would give you a pair of cross-eyes in time; and Miss Kate Belthorpe would not like the looks of you as well as she did when she saw you last, and I reckon it was constructed about right for you," added his companion on the staff with a sly chuckle.

Deck Lyon wondered where his new friend had learned anything about the young lady whose name he mentioned, and he was not particularly pleased to hear it lightly spoken in camp; for she was a sort of divinity to him, mounted on a lofty pedestal, where common people might look at her through a smoked glass, but should not irreverently speak her name.

"Where did you ever hear of that young lady?" demanded Deck, dropping his glass, and looking into the face of his fellow-officer.

"Don't pucker about it, for I have heard her spoken of only with the highest respect; and the troopers of the Riverlawn Cavalry worship her at a distance for your sake, Deck," answered

Lieutenant Herndon. "I have been trying to get acquainted with all the officers of the force, and the men for that matter; for if we get into hot water, and I have to deliver orders to them, I wish them to know me. They all want to talk to me about you; and I don't wonder at it. But what were you looking at so steadily with your field-glass? and why do you wish you could see around a corner with it?" continued Lieutenant Herndon, changing the subject of the conversation before Deck had time to defend himself with anything but a blush.

"Do you see that sharp bend in the river about a mile below the town, Frank?" asked Deck. The two staff-officers had become well enough acquainted to drop all formal address when they were not on duty.

"I see it; and I know it as well as I know my own mother. But it looks to me just as it always did, and I can see it without a glass."

"So can I; but once in a while there is something more than the bend to be seen," answered Deck.

"What is it? The ghost of the Confederate

army, which our general thought might be expected to appear somewhere in this vicinity on its way to Bowling Green, intending to replenish its exhausted supplies on the march?"

"Nothing of the sort. Inside the general's tent we know that the Confederates under Crittenden have gone to Nashville. Besides, if the army were on the other side of the Cumberland, they could not get across, unless they have brought up steamboats for the purpose."

"But Crittenden has had time to get to Nashville before now, unless his army starved to death on the way, and time enough to send a force up the river to this locality," argued Lieutenant Herndon.

"They would not go to Bowling Green this way. If they come here at all, it is only to pick up provisions, horses and mules; for they lost about all the animals they had at Beech-Grove Camp," returned Deck.

"But you don't tell me what you have seen, and I don't see anything unusual about the bend," said Lieutenant Herndon somewhat impatiently.

"I was looking in the direction of the bend

half an hour before you came on the hill, Frank," added Deck. "Three times I have seen something that looked like the bow of a steamboat advance just far enough for me to observe it; but it fell back in the same instant."

"The bow of a steamboat!" exclaimed Frank. "I did not suppose there was a steamer within fifty miles of Barkville. But this may be something serious; and don't you think we had better inform General Woodbine in regard to what you have seen, Deck?"

"But I don't know that it is a steamer yet. It may be nothing but a boat with fishermen on board," replied Deck.

"You are something of a nautical fellow, and I should think you would know a fisherman's boat from the bow of a steamer," said Frank with a laugh.

"I am not a nautical fellow, though I can handle a boat; but I could not see it well enough to make out what it was. Where is your glass, Frank? Perhaps it is a better one than mine."

"I left it in my tent, for I have no occasion to use it when loafing about the camp."

“I am of the opinion that there is a steamer lurking behind that bend on the Tennessee side of the river, but I am not sure of it; I may be mistaken. Wait till I see it again, and then I think I can decide what it is,” said Deck. “I don’t want to get up a false alarm, and turn out the whole battalion for nothing.”

“What should a steamer be doing there, hiding behind that bend, unless she means mischief?” asked Frank.

“If there is a steamer there, that is precisely what she does mean. But I will wager a pint of molasses against a quart of vinegar the people on board of her do not know there is a Union force near the town. Of course I don’t know what she is, or where she is bound; but if she is a Confederate craft, with a company of the enemy on board, Captain Batterson, with his four twelve-pounders, can knock her all to pieces if she comes this way.”

“If there is any steamer there, she is certainly Confederate; for the river turns to the south just beyond that bend, and she must have come up from Tennessee.”

“There it is again!” exclaimed Deck, somewhat excited, as he brought his glass to bear on the bend. “She has come out farther than before, and there is a man in uniform at the bow looking up the river with a field-glass.”

Lieutenant Herndon took the glass that Deck handed him, and looked at the object of interest till it backed out of sight again.

“That is all plain enough to me,” said Frank as he returned the glass. “I have no doubt that is a steamer.”

“I have no doubt now, for she showed more of herself than she has done before,” added Deck. “Now one of us must go to the general, and inform him what we have seen.”

“All right; I will go, while you will stay on the hill and watch her if she comes out,” replied Frank.

“Very well; that is the right thing to do;” and his companion started down the hill on the run. “Frank!” called Deck; and his companion returned to the top of the hill.

“Excuse me, Frank, but I suggest that you had better not run. If you do, the officers and

men will suspect there is an alarm coming, which may bother the general," said Deck.

"Thank you, Deck; I will move to the tune of 'Hark! from the tombs,' " returned the lieutenant; and he then proceeded on his mission at a moderate pace.

Deck Lyon took his handkerchief from the breast of his coat, and carefully cleaned the lenses of his glass, which he had not thought to do before. He had put it together again before the bow of the steamer appeared once more. He found that he could see much better with the glass than before. The man observed on the bow was evidently an officer, probably the commander of the force on board, if there was any. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon, and the watcher on the hill wondered if he intended to engage in a night expedition.

The bow of the steamer soon advanced again; and this time Deck saw the front of her furnaces, the doors of which were open, and cast a bright light on the forecastle. The officer was there with his field-glass, intently scrutinizing the Kentucky shore of the river. This time a new

object came into view which had very nearly escaped the observation of the lieutenant on the hill, for it was covered with a growth of wood that obstructed his vision.

The hill was about a quarter of a mile in length at its summit, but was not more than two hundred feet in width. It extended parallel with the river, and only a few rods from it, with a road between it and the stream. The elevation had been a pleasure-ground for the people of the town, with something like a road in the middle of the height, which had either been cut away, or trodden out when the young trees were just coming out of the ground.

Deck had observed that the officer in the bow of the steamer was directing his glass to a point below the town; and this caused him to change his place, and search the banks of the stream. Then he discovered a boat, containing three men, two of whom were rowing, while another in the stern-sheets was waving a white flag. He was under the shadow of the high Kentucky bank, where he could not be seen from the town. This was doubtless a signal.

Lieutenant Herndon had been gone half an hour when the watcher on the hill discovered the boat, as he found by consulting his watch. But the steamer fell back after her last advance; and Deck concluded that it was the current that governed her movements to some extent, for she could only hold her position by using her steam. But she soon came in sight again, and the observer then discovered that two field-pieces had been moved forward for use.

He had hardly made this discovery before he heard a noise near him; and, looking behind him, he saw the head of the light battery moving very slowly up the central road. Only the drivers were mounted, and even Captain Batterson was on foot. As soon as the guns were brought to the head of the road they were unlimbered, and the drivers retired with the horses. General Woodbine must have accepted the report of his staff-officers without question.

“Where is the enemy, Lieutenant Lyon?” asked Captain Batterson, as he went forward to the position Deck had taken.

"None in sight just now, Captain; but there is a steamer behind the bend of the river you see about a mile distant," replied Deck as he saluted the officer. "Three or four times she has advanced far enough for me to see an officer with a field-glass examining the river on this side. Just now I discovered a boat under our side of the bank, in which was a person making signals with a white flag to the one at the bow of the steamer."

"Can you make out the object of the expedition?" inquired the chief of the artillery.

"I can only guess at it. I fancy it is a raid to obtain provisions for the starving army on the other side of the river," replied Deck. "The supplies for General Woodbine's force arrived here yesterday, and they may have heard about them on the other side."

"I am directed not to fire a gun till I receive orders from the general; but I am here with my battery ready for business."

"The steamer has two field-pieces mounted on her forecastle," added Deck. "Ah, here comes the general himself!"

The commander of the force was on foot, and the artillerymen made way for him.

"Lieutenant Lyon, you have made an important discovery," said the general, as Captain Batterson saluted, and joined his men. "You are always on the lookout."

"It was only an accident; I have been up here every day since we arrived. Yesterday I saw something down the river I wished to examine with my glass, and I brought it up to-day," replied Deck. "The steamer is in sight again, General!" exclaimed Deck as the craft advanced.

"Your report was entirely correct, as it always is when you assert anything. I have sent your second company over into the woods below the town; and if the enemy land here, the first company with the Marion Cavalry will attack them on this side, and we shall have them surrounded, or nearly so," said the general.

"Then the enemy will all retreat to their steamer, and escape," suggested Deck. "Perhaps you have not been to the top of this hill before, General."

“You have something in your head, Lieutenant; let it out at once!”

“I was never in the habit of advising my superior officers,” replied Deck.

But General Woodbine insisted that he suggest any improvement on his plan; and the young lieutenant led him over to the verge of the hill by the side of the Cumberland.

CHAPTER II

THE SUGGESTION OF LIEUTENANT LYON

THE suspicious steamer advanced once more just as the general appeared on the hill. The commander declared that he was confident the town of Barkville would be the object of the attack. The officer with the field-glass, and especially the two cannon on the fore-castle, made it plain enough that she brought Confederate foragers or guerillas up the river; and her only purpose could be to plunder the rich country along this portion of the river.

In horses and mules Kentucky was doubtless the most plentifully supplied of any of the Southern States; for the raising of them was one of its principal industries. As a rule, the planters and farmers had abundant supplies of grain, meat, and other domestic produce; though a portion of the region near the Cumberland River had been wholly or partially depleted by

ruffian bands from both sides of it, as well as by the raids of regular Confederate forces.

“Lieutenant Herndon reported a boat on this side of the river to me, with a man in it who was waving a white flag, evidently a signal to the officer of the steamer,” said the general, as they walked towards the verge of the hill.

“You can see it for yourself, General,” replied Deck, as he pointed through an opening in the trees. “There is the boat just under the Kentucky bank, and the man in it is still waving his signal.”

The boat could be plainly seen without the aid of the glass. It kept well under the high bank, and was rowed by two negroes; but the man with the flag was white, and was plainly trying not to be seen by any person in the town, which was on lower ground than the land at each side of it. The curve of the bank concealed him from observation in the village; but from the height where the Union officers stood, it could be distinctly seen. The general looked at the boat longer than seemed necessary to determine that it was a boat containing a white man and two negroes.

“Did you see that boat come from the direction of the steamer, Lieutenant?” he asked, as he lowered his glass.

“I did not,” replied Deck.

“For the reason that it did not come from that direction,” added General Woodbine.

“I don’t quite understand you, sir.”

“All the steamers carry keel boats on their poles, something more substantial than the bateau in which the man waves the signal. That craft belongs in the town, or near it,” replied the commander. “That man lives in Barkville, or has been staying there. He is engineering the movements of the steamer, whatever they are. That is my opinion, though I may be wrong.”

“Then he knows about the supplies which were left here a few days ago for your trains.”

“I don’t believe he does; if he did, he would know there is a force of Union soldiers here, and in that case he would not wave his flag so confidently for the approach of the steamer, if that is what it means,” replied the general, still observing the bateau.

“He could not live in the town without know-

ing about the supplies and your command," suggested Deck. "Excuse me, General, but your theory is a little puzzling to me."

"I don't quite understand the matter myself. The man may live in the country over by the bend. Perhaps the signal does not mean what we have been supposing. If the fellow in the boat is aware that our force is in camp half a mile from the village, the white flag must mean for the steamer not to approach the town. However, we cannot solve the puzzle; and we might as well prepare for action, whether we are called upon to defend the town or not," said the general, as he walked towards the river.

"You have already sent the second company of the Riverlawns over into the woods the other side of the place," continued Deck, attending the commander to the verge of the hill.

"Precisely so; and at a signal from the hill north of the road on which our camp is located, Captain Truman will gallop into the village, while Major Lyon, commanding the first company and the Marion Cavalry, will enter the town by the road from the camp. The signal to move will

not be given till the force from the steamer have all landed, and are well away from the river. The first company will get to the levee as soon as the enemy have landed, and thus cut off a retreat, if it comes to that. But you have an idea in your head, and you have proved yourself to be a strategist on more than one occasion, and I want to hear what you have to say."

"I am not a strategist, General Woodbine," protested Deck, blushing like a maiden of sixteen. "I have never studied the art of war as you have, though I have read a few books on military subjects."

"Never mind that now; though strategy, like chess-playing, sometimes comes by nature. What is your idea, Lieutenant?" demanded the commander rather impatiently.

"When the enemy have landed from the steamer, of course they will hurry into the town to pick up whatever they can find," replied Deck, delivering himself with energy, stimulated to do so by the impatient remark of the commander. "As soon as they are fairly in the town, our force will attack them, and ride them down; and then

they will retreat to the steamer, and get away as soon as possible."

"Quite correct; and that is just the way the affair will work. But the first company will cut off the retreat to the boat," added the general.

"Then the guard left on the steamer, for I suppose a guard will be on her deck, will back her from the levee, and pick up their men wherever the first company have driven them," Deck explained.

"I don't imagine that the boat brings more than one company, and we shall outnumber them three to one, and they are likely to be all captured."

"I should suppose that would be the final result; but while our men are securing the prisoners, the steamer will back away from the levee, and escape down the river," suggested the lieutenant.

"But I have posted Captain Batterson's battery on this hill to provide for that very emergency; and he can knock the steamer all to pieces in five minutes," replied the general with a smile; for he believed he had upset all the objections of his staff-officer.

"I am inclined to believe that steamer would be a very useful plaything for you, though you do not yet know what orders will come for your command," replied the lieutenant, smiling with his superior. "If you should be disposed to make a raid into Tennessee, as you suggested on the march yesterday, that boat would be very convenient for you to have."

"You are right, Deck, as you are almost always," said the commander, coming down to familiar terms with his subordinate. "We must not sink that steamer, or let her run away. Your idea comes in now; what is it?"

"Perhaps you have not seen that there is a road between this hill and the river?"

"I have not," answered the commander, as he looked over the bluff of the elevation, which was a sheer precipice, and Deck did the same. "I have not looked over this locality, or even been into the town. An officer of the Home Guard here came to the camp to inform me that our supplies had arrived, consigned to him, and he had stored them in the building occupied by the post-office. I was not feeling very well this

morning, and remained in my tent till Herndon came to me with the news obtained on this hill. I see the road, and it forks into the one by the camp just above it. But what about the road, Lieutenant?"

"I respectfully suggest that we had better make use of it, General," replied Deck, very humble in his manner, to avoid being thought "wiser than the law allows."

"Use it for what?" demanded the commander rather brusquely. "Speak out just what you mean, as though you were talking to Herndon, and not to me."

"If I were in command, I should send a squad of twenty men under Lieutenant Knox from the second platoon of the first company, all mounted, in single file, to the inward curve of the bluff below us, where they could not be seen by the steamer's people," returned Deck, speaking with a sort of desperation; for by this time the suspicious craft had come out into the river in plain sight a mile distant.

"Go on, Lieutenant!" said the general sharply, as he saw the steamer heading down the river.

“Knox should have with him, on foot, Sam Drye and Dick Beckland, both of whom have been engineers on a steamer,” continued the lieutenant, hurrying his speech as the occasion seemed to require. “As soon as the enemy had all landed, and were well away from the levee, Knox should advance with his squad by twos, and dash on the deck of the steamer, taking possession of her. The two engineers with him should spring to the throttle, having cast off the fasts on their way, and then back the boat away from the shore.”

“Do you expect the squad to ride from the levee to the deck of the steamer?” asked the commander.

“I do, sir; these steamers have a gangway about six feet wide, as I have often seen on the Green River,” replied Deck, without abating his warmth and energy.

General Woodbine looked for a moment in silence upon the enemy's steamer as she rounded into the river, evidently considering the plan just suggested by the young officer.

“Your plan does not interfere at all with mine,

and is only an addition to it. Therefore I shall adopt it; but you must conduct the affair yourself, or at least be present at its execution," said the commander. "You shall manage it yourself, Lieutenant Lyon, and choose your own time to execute it; in a word, I shall give you no orders. You may carry my order to Lieutenant Knox, and no call will be made upon you for further duty till this affair is finished. I shall remain on this hill during the skirmish, and you will send Lieutenant Herndon to me."

"Herndon is here, General," added Deck, as he pointed his field-glass to the steamer. "She has some cavalry on board," said he. "There is at least a full company of infantry on her hurricane deck, and perhaps as many more in her saloon."

"The more the merrier," added the commander; and then Deck hastened to the camp with the order for Life Knox, which he delivered at once, and told him to select his force of twenty men.

He then went to Captain Gordon, and repeated his orders to him. The two engineers were detailed for duty, and Lieutenant Knox mustered

the men he had selected from his own platoon. Deck mounted his horse after he had obtained his arms from the tent.

"What are we uns up to now, Deck?" asked Life.

"Speak English, now that you are a lieutenant, my brave Kentuckian," replied the staff-officer, who had been doing what he could to improve the speech of his friend and intense admirer. "Don't say 'we uns' any more."

"But I forget about it," replied the stalwart fellow. "What are we about now?"

"That is better; and I will tell you all about it in due time. We are going to the road on the other side of the hill. March in single file, and hug the precipice as it were your Kentucky sweetheart, Life, all the time you remain there, and it may be for an hour or more."

He rode to the place indicated, and stationed the squad there. Life declared that he had no sweetheart, and never had one, and he did not know anything about hugging; but he would keep every trooper close to the bluff, if that was what the staff-officer meant.

"Lieutenant Lyon!" called Herndon from the top of the precipice.

"Here, Lieutenant Herndon!" replied Deck.

"General Woodbine desires you to ride up here," added the other staff-officer. "Come at once!"

Deck galloped up the road at Ceph's best speed to the inclined plane that led to the top of the hill.

"The steamer has stopped her paddles half a mile from here," said the commander, when Deck saluted him. "I may have to change all my plans, and I want you here till I ascertain what the steamer intends to do. Can the officer in command on board of her have discovered that there is a force here?"

"I should say that was quite impossible; for there is the boat with the signalman in it just where it was before," replied the lieutenant. "The steamer keeps on the other side of the river, and the man in the bateau seems to be afraid of being seen from the town."

"The steamer starts again!" exclaimed the general. "I was afraid she might land her armed

force below the town, and I wanted to be ready for it. All right now, for she is headed directly for the levee. You may return when ready to the road below."

But Deck was in no hurry, as he had his force in position ; and he remained on the hill a while longer.

CHAPTER III

THE HARBINGER FIRES THE FIRST GUNS

THE stopping of the suspicious steamer had greatly disturbed General Woodbine. There was a regular steamboat-landing in front of Barkville, and the commander had expected that the approaching boat would come to it if she made a landing at any point in this portion of the river. But there was a creek half a mile below the town; and he had been afraid she would run into the mouth of it, and would land her force there.

Probably the man in the little flatboat had come out of this small tributary; for Deck, who had been looking down the river for at least an hour before he discovered the boat, had seen no craft of any kind leave the town landing. If the man lived in the village he could not have helped knowing that a battalion of Union troops had arrived in the vicinity the evening before.

The landing-place of the town was like any similar one on the Western rivers. It was a sandy beach, extending rather abruptly down to the water's edge at any stage of the stream, which was unusually high at the present time on account of the recent heavy rain-storms. When a steamer made a landing at the town, she ran diagonally on the beach from down stream, coming about if she was descending the river in order to do so; for the current contributed in holding her in position. If she came on a landing from the opposite direction, the flow of the stream would swing her around, and dislodge her from the bottom on which she rested her bow.

"Is everything working right, General Woodbine?" asked Deck, after he had looked over the situation.

"So far as I can see, it is," replied the commander. "I have a trusty man on the hill by the camp to give the signal for the advance of the second company, and I have only to send Herndon with the order for Major Lyon to move. I don't see how there can be any slip-up in the arrangements we have made."

"Of course Captain Truman will be on the lookout for your signal."

"I suggested to the captain that he had better have Sergeant Yowell climb a tree where he could distinctly see the camp-hill. The people of the village seem to have found out that something is the matter; for they are gathering on the shore, watching the steamer."

At this moment Lieutenant Herndon came up to the general and saluted him, evidently with a message or an inquiry.

"The artillery sentinel at the head of the incline has just stopped a committee of three from the town, all mounted; and their horses look as though they had been in a hurry," said the staff-officer.

"I am not a Connecticut Yankee, though my father was, but I can guess what they want," replied the commander, as he sent for his horse, on which he had ridden up from the camp. "I will meet them where they are; for I should like to have them quiet the people, and prevent them from doing any foolish thing."

He mounted his horse, and rode over to the in-

cline, where the committee awaited him. It was Sunday; and the visitors had doubtless been to church, for they were all dressed in their best clothes, and wore immaculate dickeys. They all took off their hats to the commander, and treated him with the most profound deference.

“May I ask if you are the commander of the forces in this county?” asked the most dignified of the three.

“I am in command of the battalion of Union troops at present in this vicinity,” replied the general, bowing to the speaker.

“There is a steamer approaching the town, which appears to have a military force on board,” continued the chairman.

“I am aware of the fact; and as my time is valuable just now, I must beg you to come at once to the point, and state the object of your visit,” added the commander rather sharply.

“We have a company of Home Guards in the place, and” —

“Don’t call them out!” said the general very decidedly.

“We were about to ring the church bells to” —

"Don't do it!" protested the commander.

"Who and what are you, gentlemen?"

"We are the town council, of which I have the honor to be the chairman," said the most dignified.

"I am glad to see you, but I have no time to spare," said the general, who was still polite; but his manner had become rather brusque and very decided, for he was afraid the civilians would talk all day if he permitted them to do so. "I have made all my preparations to defend the town, and any movement on the part of the citizens or the Home Guard will interfere with them. You can see that I have a battery on this hill, though that is but a small part of what I have arranged for the defence of the place."

"But the steamer has cannons on her deck," suggested the dignified chairman.

"They will not use them unless your Home Guard should confront them on the landing; and in that case I could knock the steamer all to pieces before she reached the shore if I were so disposed," replied the commander, speaking very hurriedly. "Now I will tell you what I

wish you to do; and the safety of your people depends upon their observance of my instructions, and if any of them are ridden down by my cavalry, it will be your fault and theirs."

"There seems to be a large force on the steamer. Have you force enough to cope with them?"

"In ten minutes after I give the signal, there will be three hundred troopers in your streets and at the landing. I see some of your citizens are gathering on the shore. Send them and all the rest of your people to their homes; and, above all, let your Home Guards go to bed, or at least keep out of sight. Have every man, woman, and child go into the house, and stay there. In the roads they will be in danger from friends and enemies. That's all I have to say."

Without waiting to answer any questions, or to hear any speeches of the dignified chairman, General Woodbine wheeled his horse, and galloped back to the other end of the hill.

"Anything new, Lieutenant Lyon?" he demanded, as he dismounted, and gave his horse to his orderly.

“Nothing new, General; but the steamer is still approaching the landing, and is now not more than half a mile distant from it; but she is moving very slowly, or she would have been there before this time,” replied Deck. “Excuse me, sir, but it is time for me to join my squad under the hill.”

“All right, Lieutenant. If you take possession of the steamer at the right time, and get her away from the landing, make it your first business to capture that man in the bateau; for I wish to know something more about him,” added the commander.

“What shall I do with the steamer after that?”

“Return to the landing-place when you are satisfied that the fight is well over; and I don’t think it will amount to much,” replied the general, as Deck turned his horse, and rode off in the direction of the incline.

Lieutenant Knox’s force of twenty men were assembled on the river side of the hill, close to the precipice, where they could not be seen from the enemy’s craft as she approached the

landing. On the other side of the long hill, under the command of Major Lyon, were the two companies of Captain Gordon and Captain Richland, the former concealed under the long hill, and the latter in the road from the camp, behind the houses of the village. Lieutenant Herndon sat on his horse within speaking distance of the commander, ready to carry his commands to the troopers below.

At the highest point on the long hill, there was a flagstaff where the citizens in better times had been in the habit of hoisting "Old Glory," and firing a salute on the Fourth of July. The general had arranged to run up the national ensign as a signal to the man on the camp-hill, and for the movement of Major Lyon's command. But, fearful that it might not be seen by all concerned, he intended to send his order to the major by his remaining staff-officer.

Deck found the boarding-squad in good order on his arrival under the hill. He rode in ahead of the lieutenant, and then hugged the cliff as the rest of them were doing. Not even Knox knew what his force were to do, and it was

necessary to instruct them; for their movement was to be made with a rush, like a hurricane breaking upon a devoted town.

"Are we to halt here all the rest of the day, Leftenant?" inquired Life, as Deck turned his horse so as to face the stout Kentuckian.

"Not leftenant, for that is not the fashion in modern times in this country, but lieutenant, as though the first syllable were spelled l-u," said the staff-officer with a laugh.

"All right, Lieutenant," replied Life, pronouncing it correctly this time, as he had sometimes before. "But I think I had rather be an orderly-sergeant than have so much grammar and dictionary stuffed into me."

"You will soon have a commission as a lieutenant, and you don't want to report to your superior officer in backwoods English," suggested Deck.

"I had a fair share of learning when I was a young feller" —

"Fellow," prompted the lieutenant.

"When I was a young fellow; but among the hunters and trappers beyond the Rockies I fell

into their way of talking more'n I wish I had. But what are we gwine to do, Lieutenant?"

"'Gwine' is niggerish. We are *going* to do a big thing, Life. Where are Drye and Beckland?"

"They are both here."

"Call them up, for I want them to hear what I have to say to you."

The two engineers were called, and placed themselves out of sight behind Deck's horse.

"Just as soon as the force on that steamer have landed, and made their way up into the town, you will march your men at a rapid gallop down to the steamer. They will leave the wide gangplank by which the force comes ashore. Go down by twos, and dash up that plank in the same order. If there are any soldiers on board who make opposition, shoot them with your revolvers, or cut them down with your sabres. In other words, take possession of the boat in spite of any force on board of her. Do you understand it all clearly?"

"I reckon I do, and it is as easy as the multiplication table up to ten times ten."

"That's so, and spoken in very good English," replied Deck. "Now, Drye, I am going to appoint you, by the authority of General Woodbine, the engineer of that steamer; and you will go to the engine as soon as you get on board of her."

"I shall be at home there," answered Drye.

"As you and Beckland go on board, you will cast off the fasts of the steamer if they get any out. Of course you will go behind the rest of the men," continued the staff-officer.

"But what am I to do after I get on board?" asked Beckland.

"You will take charge of the darky firemen, and be ready to take Drye's place in case anything happens to him. That's all. Now, Lieutenant Knox, you had better tell your men what they are to do, and don't let one of them flinch or hang back, whatever happens, for we don't know our ground very well."

Both Deck and Knox instructed the men, and in five minutes they were ready for action; for in the curve of the cliff they were easily out of sight of those on the forecastle of the steamer. On the

hill, General Woodbine was eagerly watching the slow approach of the Harbinger; for with his field-glass Deck had been able to read the name over her lofty pilot-house. The town council, with the aid of the sheriff and other officers, had passed around the instructions of the general. The people on the levee and on the front street had all retired, and the village looked as quiet as it ought to be on a Sunday afternoon. Though they could not be seen, the people had probably retired to their houses, as much for their own safety as not to interfere with the movements of the troops.

Suddenly the report of the two guns on the forecastle of the Harbinger resounded on the still Sabbath air; but the shots only ploughed up the sands of the beach at the landing. With his glass the commander saw the artillerymen on the deck reloading the pieces; but they were not fired again. Doubtless they had been discharged only to "wake up the town," as the enemy would have expressed it.

The steamer slowly approached the landing, and thrust her nose into the sand. Without a moment's delay the wide gangway was run to the

dry land, and the troops on board began to disembark. No force appeared to oppose them, and they marched forward confidently into the town. Then the American flag was run up on the summit of the long hill. Lieutenant Herndon galloped his steed down the incline with the order to Major Lyon.

“Left — by twos — march!” called Knox when ordered to do so by Deck.

Then the squad dashed down the road to the landing.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIGHT ON BOARD THE STEAMER

DECK's horse was named after the celebrated horse of Alexander the Great; though the four syllables of the word had been contracted into one, and was always called Ceph. He knew his name as well as his master did, and was as fond of him as though he had been an affectionate spaniel. He had been highly trained by his rider, and had never received a blow from him; in fact, the young cavalryman would as soon have thought of striking his mother as his favorite steed.

As soon as Lieutenant Knox gave the order to march, Deck simply said, "Come, Ceph!" and the intelligent animal started. "Come, Ceph, lively!" added the rider a moment later; and the steed broke into a smart gallop. Deck patted him on the neck, and he increased his speed so that no other horse in the squad could keep up with

him. There was a sort of freemasonry between them into which Ceph had been initiated, and which he had practised for nearly two years. The officer had never worn spurs, because he never had occasion for them; for a kindly word would cause the noble animal to do all he could in the matter of speed better than spurs would have stimulated him.

Ceph was fresh from the pickets, and he went at a mad gallop. The rider kept his eyes wide open, as he always did when on duty. He had seen the force of the enemy land from the Harbinger; and it included a squad of about a dozen cavalry, wearing the gray of the Confederate army, as did the infantry that preceded them. The detachment hastily formed on the beach; and the troopers went to the front, leading the way into the town. In a few moments they had disappeared, taking the principal street. They all marched at the double-quick, as though they were in a hurry to complete the work in which they were engaged.

The steamer had made her landing at the upper front of the place, and it was but a short ride

from the cliff to the boat. Knox was not more than a minute behind the staff-officer; and the dashing lieutenant did not look to the right nor the left, but kept his gaze fixed upon the gang-plank of the Harbinger, riding to it by the shortest way. Without any hesitation he galloped up to the platform, closely followed by his troopers.

If a guard had been left on board to protect the steamer, they were on the after deck or in the saloon; and Deck, who had not led the way up the gang-plank, soon discovered that the guard were observing the movements of the troops who had gone on shore, at the stern of the boat. The lieutenant rode far enough to enable him to obtain a glance up the street by which the Confederate force had advanced. On his way back at the best speed of Ceph, he was fired at, and he heard the ball whizz behind his head; but "a miss was as good as a mile," and he reached the gang-plank in safety.

He had seen the enemy on shore in his hasty glance up the street, and they had halted in an open space in the centre of the village. He concluded that the commander of the force desired

to find some person who could give him needed information; for the town council had so effectually carried out the instructions of General Woodbine, that not a man, woman, nor child was to be seen in the streets. But the lieutenant had no time to study or speculate on the situation.

Without checking the speed of his horse, Deck dashed up the plank to the forecastle of the boat, when he reined in to ascertain how far Knox had proceeded. He found that the acting lieutenant had left four men near the engines, and advanced with the others to the after part of the steamer, where a conflict was in progress. The guard fired upon the bold boarders, and one man dropped from his saddle. This was war; and, dropping their sabres so that they hung by the cords to their wrists, they drew their revolvers, and began to fire with great rapidity, for there was not room enough on the deck to manœuvre with horses.

Deck rode aft as soon as he heard the firing of the combatants at the other end of the boat. On his arrival the enemy had discharged their muskets; and as they were obliged to reload before

they could do anything more with bullets, they were trying to advance, and make a bayonet charge upon the horsemen; but the troopers were used to this sort of thing, and cut down those who advanced, till the remnant of them retreated to a position where the horses could not follow them.

“Do you surrender, or shall we shoot down the rest of you?” demanded Lieutenant Knox, prompted by the staff-officer.

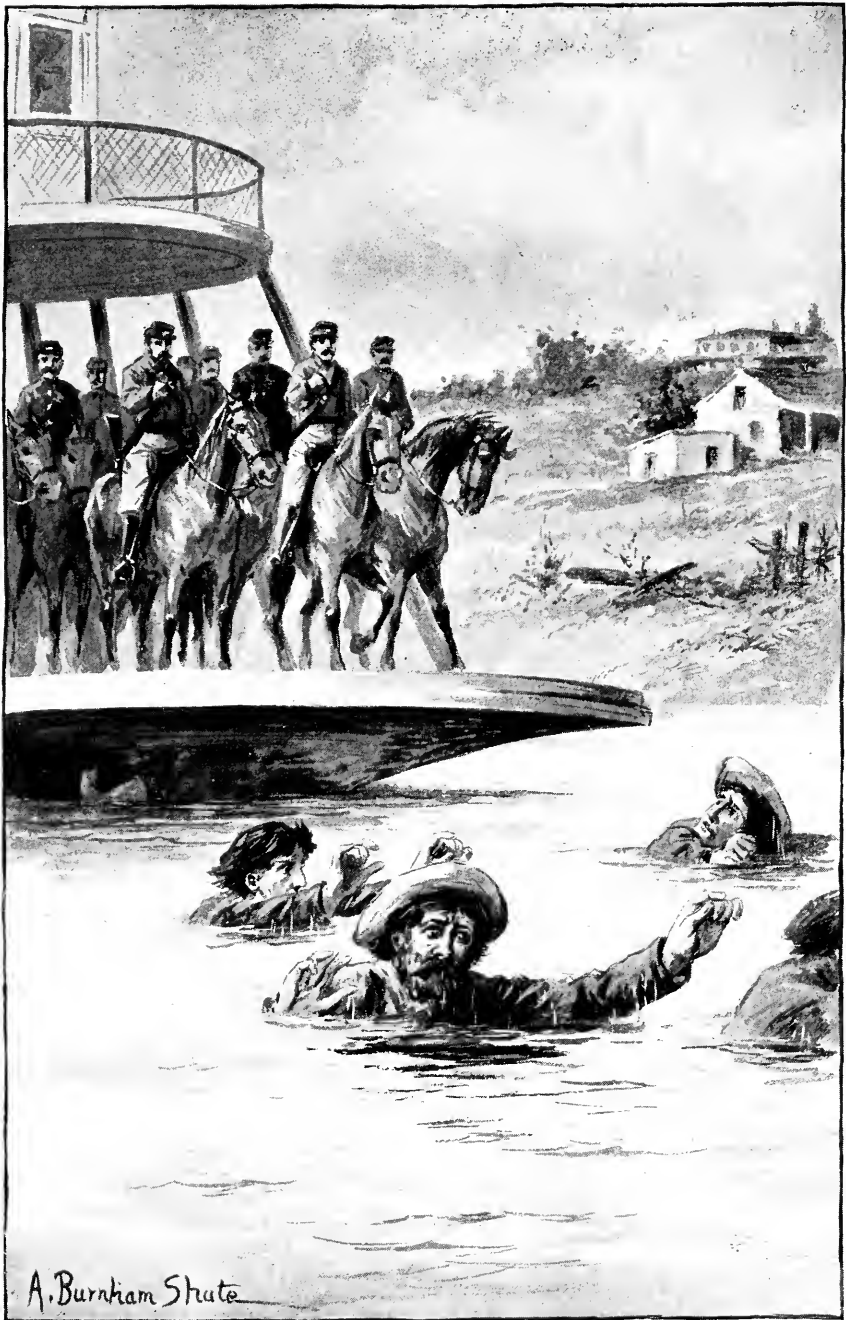
“We surrender,” replied a sergeant, who appeared to be in command of the party.

“No, we don’t!” exclaimed one of the number, as he dropped into the water at the stern of the boat.

He was followed by four others; and the troopers pointed their revolvers at their heads as they were seen standing up to their necks in the river.

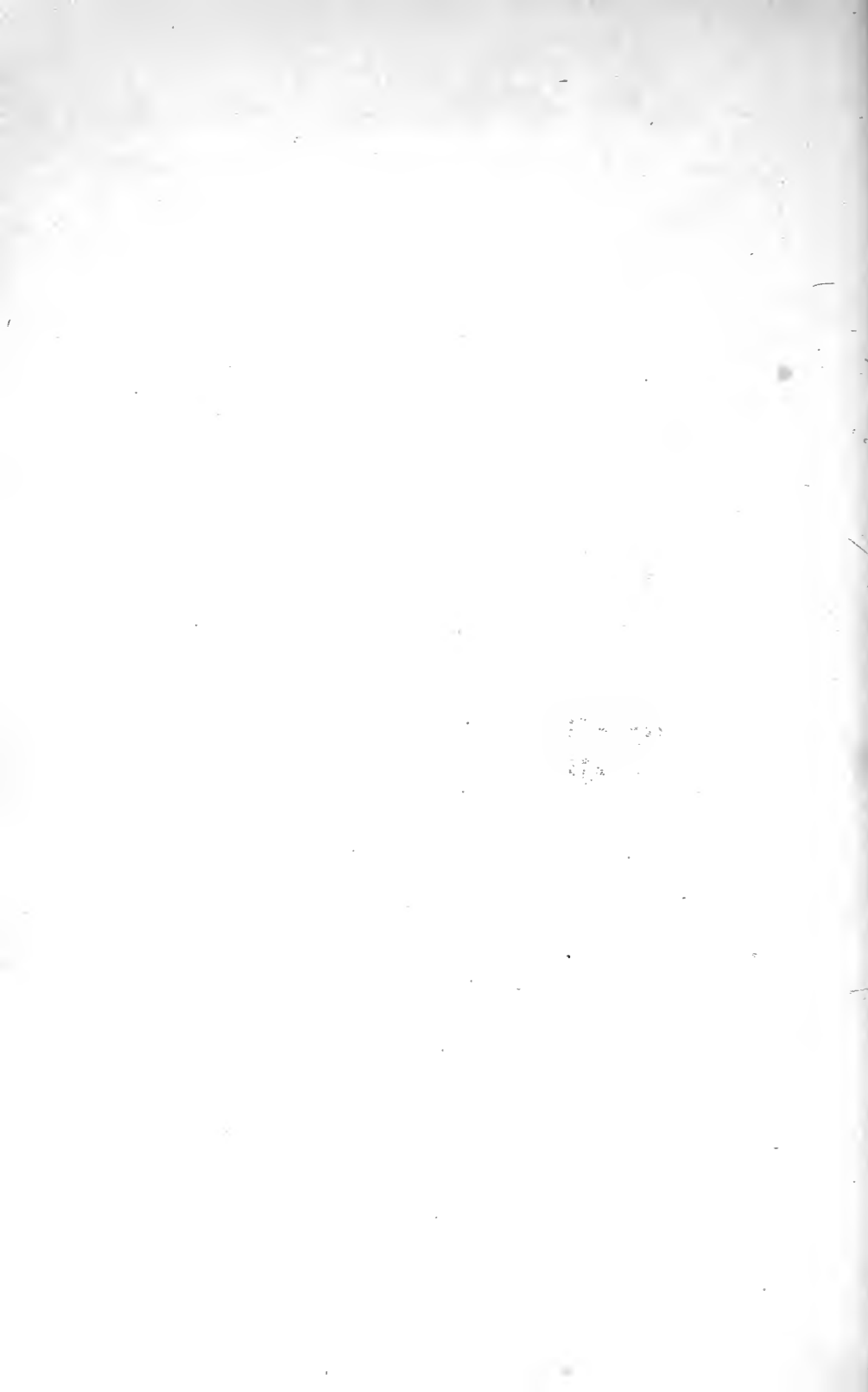
“Don’t fire!” shouted Deck with all the strength of his lungs; for he never permitted an inhuman action, even in the excitement of battle.

“Return pistols!” added Knox in a vigor-



"The troopers pointed their revolvers at their heads."

Page 58.



ous tone; for he always seconded Deck with all his might.

“Let them go; they have only jumped out of the frying-pan into the fire,” said the staff-officer, as he saw the five men waddling with all their might towards the shore.

“Those that want to surrender, bring out your arms, and lay them down on deck!” continued Lieutenant Knox in hurried tones.

But only three men obeyed the summons; for five had escaped, two had been killed, and two more appeared to be badly wounded, so that they could not obey the call. Knox dismounted his men, and ordered them to secure their horses at a pole extended from two stanchions, where the animals of the cavalymen who had landed had evidently been tied. Deck's horse was taken by one of the men, and he hastened forward to ascertain the situation there.

The skirmish on the deck of the Harbinger had lasted hardly more than five minutes, for at such times everything is done with a snap. Drye and Beckland had come on foot from the cliff; and though they ran all the way, the fight

was coming to an end when they reached the levee. Then the heavy line with which the boat was secured to a post was drawn taut by the action of the current on the craft, and they had not been able to cast it off. They were struggling to detach it when Deck appeared on the forecastle.

“Slack off that bow-line!” shouted Drye.

“Slack it off!” repeated Deck to one of the sentinels who were standing at the engines.

One of them obeyed the order, and let off enough of the line from the cleat where it was made fast to enable the engineers to slip it over the post. The staff-officer called the other sentinels, and ordered them to haul in the line; and the boat was then free from her connection with the shore. But the five men who had waded ashore needed a little violent exercise to warm them up after their cold bath on a January day; and possibly they were somewhat stimulated in addition by the thought that a shower of balls from the carbines of the troopers might overtake them, and they ran with all the speed they could command towards the street

where the main body of the Confederate force had disappeared. They made some furious gestures, and waved everything they had to wave, evidently for the purpose of attracting the attention of their comrades in arms.

The short time that had elapsed since the signal for the outlying companies to advance had not been sufficient to enable the three to reach the centre of the village; but Deck saw Captain Gordon's men galloping down the road between the long hill and the village. But the dozen Confederate troopers he had seen land from the Harbinger might respond to the signals of those who had escaped, and make trouble, and he hastened the movements on board of the steamer.

Without any orders from the lieutenant in command, Drye hastened to the starboard engineer, and Beckland ordered the firemen to stir up the fuel in the furnaces. The command of the latter was promptly obeyed; for the negroes saw the uniform of the troopers, and had seen enough to enable them to comprehend the situation.

"I will relieve you from further duty at this engine," said Drye to the starboard engineer, who was a stout and fat man.

"Who are you?" demanded the engineer, with an expletive which need not be repeated.

"I am appointed by the general in command of the Union forces here to take charge of this engine," replied Drye with entire self-possession.

"Well, you won't take charge of it," added the engineer, with a string of oaths which shocked Drye; for he was a member of the Baptist Church in good and regular standing.

At the same time the Secessionist, as his actions plainly proved that he was, began to pull a revolver from his hip pocket. Corporal Drye had his drawn sabre in his hand, held behind him, in anticipation of any resistance to the order of his superior; and he proved that he was a member of the church militant as well as the other, for he brought the flat of the blade across the side of the engineer's head with a force which knocked whatever sense he had in it entirely out. Then he dragged his victim

out of the way, and handed him over to other members of the party.

“Are you all ready, Drye?” asked Deck, as he approached the engine.

“I am all ready, Lieutenant; but I reckon you didn’t know it takes two engineers to run this boat, for she has a separate engine on each side.”

“I did know it, but I did not think of it,” replied Deck. “Beckland!” he called to the other engineer, “take charge of the port engine;” and the trooper hastened to obey the order. “Now, Beckland, back the port engine.”

The port engineer obeyed, for he was perfectly at home in his position; and the wheel on that side of the steamer began to turn. The effect was not only to back the boat, but to bring her about so that she was headed down the river. The movement had carried her into this position about a hundred feet from the shore, and then Beckland was directed to stop his machine.

The staff-officer was anxious to see what was going on in the village, and on the levee in

front of it. The five men who had waded ashore had disappeared in the principal street; but it was plain that they had been seen, and their signals interpreted; for the little squad of Confederate cavalry came rushing down the street at a gallop, but it was only to blunder upon the first company of the Riverlawns, or to be swept away by this body.

Deck could hear Captain Gordon's order to charge upon the enemy in front of him; and then he ascended to the pilot-house, Knox sending Sergeant Sluder and Corporal Milton with him to insure his safety. When the trio reached the hurricane deck, they halted to see the expected action. The current had carried the Harbinger a short distance down the stream, and she was then abreast of the principal street.

The first company of the Riverlawns charged upon the dozen of the enemy; and it seemed to the observers as though they had been suddenly annihilated, for a couple of them dropped from their saddles, and the rest fled up the street, as they were perfectly justified in doing, and should have done sooner, when they realized that they

were confronting an overwhelming force of at least six times their own number.

Captain Gordon's company followed them up the street; but he did not hurry his men, for he knew that two other companies were hastening to the same focal point in the town. Deck saw so much, and he was about to make his way up to the pilot-house, when he discovered the head of the second company, moving by fours, wheel into the farther end of the street. He had the commission of the general to execute; and he could remain no longer as an observer, much as he wished to do so.

In the pilot-house he found a bony Western man standing at a side window, smoking a pipe, and observing the action on shore.

"Are you the pilot of the Harbinger?" asked Deck, as he entered the apartment.

"I am the chief pilot, and my assistants are outside, watching the fun on shore," replied the man good-naturedly. "But it begins to look as though this boat would not be wanted much longer about here. I make bold to ask who you are, though I see you wear a Yankee uniform?"

“I am on the staff of General Woodbine, in command of the Union force on shore,” replied Deck. “I wish to use this boat immediately; and if you don’t object, I shall put Sergeant Sluder in your place.”

“And I reckon you will if I do object,” chuckled the pilot. “I am a Dutch German, and I don’t care a pin which side gets the best of it in this fight. I am right willing to act as pilot for you. My name is Kleineniederländische. If you want me, you have only to call me by name,” chuckled the man.

“Is that all? Well, then, start the boat ahead, Mr. Klootsprechtschenopenstein,” laughed Deck, using a composite name he had learned in school.

He concluded that the pilot was fooling him; but the boat went ahead, and that was all he wanted.

CHAPTER V

A DESPERATE ACTION IN THE TOWN

THE pilot of the Harbinger was evidently a humorist in his own way. The staff-officer was well aware himself that he was a young man ; and the engineer seemed to regard him as nothing but a boy, and was disposed to treat him as such, and especially to be very jolly with him. But he rang the bells at the engine, and when the steamer began to move he headed her out into the stream.

Deck had no confidence in the man, and would not trust him. He placed the sergeant and the corporal who had come up with him, at the doors of the pilot-house, both of which were open, and both men had their hands on their revolvers. He did not believe that he was a German, although he appeared to have some knowledge of the language ; but his English was quite as good as that of ordinary Americans.

“How much water does this boat draw, Mr.

Pilot?" asked the lieutenant, without attempting to speak the name given him.

"Three feet and a half when she is not loaded any heavier than she is now," replied the humorist; "but I reckon she will want four or four and a half when she has taken on board the stores she came here for."

"Very likely she will, Herr Kloots; but I am decidedly of the opinion that she will remain as light as she is now," answered Deck. "I don't think you need go any farther out into the river."

"You haven't told me where to take the boat, Little One."

"Do you see that bateau, punt, flatboat, or whatever you call her here, near the Kentucky shore?" asked the officer.

"No, I don't see it. I am a little deaf in one eye; but if you will lend me your squinter, I may make it out," replied the pilot, pointing to the case in which Deck carried his field-glass suspended from his shoulder.

"If you are as blind as that, you are not fit for a pilot; and I think I will call in Sergeant Sluder, and have him take your place," said

the lieutenant in sharper tones than he had spoken before.

"I reckon you won't do nothing of the sort, Little Joker," answered Mr. Kleineniederländische.

"I might as well remark at this stage, in the mildest and sweetest manner possible, that if you don't obey my orders I shall invite my men at the doors to put one or more bullets through that head of yours," added Deck.

"I won't bother you to do that, for while you are in command of the Harbinger I will obey your orders," replied the pilot, with a broad grin playing around the stem of his pipe, which he still held by his teeth. "I am willing to say that I can see the flatboat now, for I was looking the wrong way before."

"All right, Mr. Kloots. Head her for it, and go ahead at full speed," added Deck.

The pilot used his bell-pulls; and the Harbinger increased her speed, so that she was within hail of the little boat in a few minutes. The lieutenant sent Corporal Milton down to the main deck with an order to Knox to pick up the white

man, and leave the negroes in the bateau. But the signalman had discovered, as the steamer approached, that some change had taken place on board of her, and his oarsmen were now pulling with all their might for the shore. The Harbinger was too quick for them, and she soon came up with the craft.

“Stop your boat, or we will fire into you!” shouted Knox from the forecastle.

“Stop her, Mr. Kloots!” said Deck; and the pilot promptly obeyed him.

Both Sergeant Sluder and Corporal Milton were trustworthy men; and after the lieutenant had instructed them to watch the pilot, and telling them what to do if he should prove to be refractory, he descended to the main deck. He found Lieutenant Knox with half his men on the forecastle. Life had ordered the boat to stop; and the negroes, in mortal terror of their lives, had ceased to row, and the signalman was storming at them in the most violent manner, trying to make them renew their efforts to escape.

“Take your oars, you black rascals!” shouted the fellow. “We shall get into shallow water

in three minutes, where the steamer cannot follow us ! ”

“ But de bullets catch up wid us shore,” replied one of them ; and they refused to use an oar.

Standing near the bow, Deck could see the pilot, and gave him the order to back her when he saw that the headway of the steamer would run the bateau down.

“ Stop her ! ” he shouted when the signalman was within reach of the long arms of the tall Kentuckian. “ One turn ahead ! ” he called, as the current carried the boat a little farther from the steamer.

This movement brought the Harbinger bunt against the bateau. Knox lay down by the stem of the steamer, and, reaching down, grasped the signalman, who was standing up in the stern of the little craft, and dragged him on board as though he had been nothing but a small boy. He flung him upon the deck as though he had been an unclean beast. He looked like a well-to-do farmer, and was dressed well, though in the costume of his class of people.

"What are you about?" demanded the farmer, springing to his feet, and gazing earnestly at Deck and Knox.

"We are about to put you in some safe place," replied Deck, after he had given the pilot an order to bring the steamer about, and run up to the town. "Are you a loyal citizen of Kentucky? for I judge that you live on that side of the river."

"I am not what you call a loyal citizen, wearing the blue uniform, but I am a loyal citizen of my country," answered the farmer sullenly.

"What is your country?"

"The Confederate States of America."

"So I supposed," added Deck. "What were you doing in that flatboat?"

"I was doing my duty to my country by informing our brave troops that the coast was clear for them to make a landing at the levee of Barkville."

"What is your name, if you please?" inquired the lieutenant on the staff.

"Ethan Thornfield; and I'm not ashamed of it. But I don't understand this business," replied

the farmer. "It looks just as though you had captured the Harbinger, or run away with her from the landing. If you please, I should like to know something about what you have been doing," Mr. Thornfield proceeded in a tone which proved that he could be a gentleman even while he was a Secessionist.

"I shall be happy to inform you what we have been doing, and what we are still doing, after you have given me full information in regard to what you have been doing," Deck returned.

"As I can't harm my countrymen by doing so, I don't object," said Thornfield, seating himself on a barrel with the remark that he was very tired. "I live over on the Marrow Bone Road, near the creek that comes into the Cumberland just below here. I am not as poor as you may think I am; and I own a steam-launch, which I keep on the creek, and often go to town by water. Well, I haven't been there for a week; but a friend of mine there came over to see me the other day, and told me that a train of wagons was to bring a large supply of stores for a Yankee force that was coming this way."

“Slow her down, Pilot!” called Deck to the Dutch-German.

“Besides,” resumed the signalman, “I know of a lot of Kentucky farmers who are Yankees at heart; and they have plenty of grain, meat, horses, mules, and niggers; and this sort of goods would help out our army in Tennessee, where Crittenden took all the supplies of the farmers, and gave them receipts for them. I started down the creek in my steam-launch with three niggers, towing that punt, and went down to Martinsville, where I had business of my own.

“I found the Harbinger there, bound up the river looking for supplies. I went on board of her, and met Captain Altamont, in command of the force she carried, and I gave him my news. I started for home, and steamed all night in the launch, and got to the mouth of the creek at noon to-day. I promised Captain Altamont that I would signal him with a white cloth on a boathook if the way was clear for him to make a landing at Barkville. He was slow about coming up the river after I made the signals; why I don’t know. That’s all I know about the affair.”

Mr. Thornfield seemed to be a fairly well-educated man, judging from his speech, and Lieutenant Lyon believed he had told the whole truth; for he was plainly a square man, in spite of his politics. By this time the Harbinger was off the levee; and the staff-officer ordered the pilot to stop her, and keep her where she was, at a distance of about three hundred feet from the beach.

"I am sorry to have to inform you, Mr. Thornfield, after you have told me such a straight story, that you have led your military friends into a very ugly trap," said Deck, when the farmer had finished his narrative. "But what has become of your steam-launch?"

"I sent it up the creek by the nigger engineer, and the two other niggers pulled me up the river where you saw me. But what do you mean by an ugly trap, Lieutenant?"

"General Woodbine, with three full companies of cavalry and a battery, arrived at this place last night, and the supplies are for his command. I discovered the bow of the steamer when she came half a dozen times out from behind the

bank on the other side of the river. Later I saw your punt, and the signals you made. The general was mystified by your actions, and he will be glad to have your movements explained to him. We captured the steamer to prevent the Confederates from escaping in her. Captain Altamont's command is surrounded long before this time; and he must surrender, or his men will be cut to pieces."

"And I led him into this trap!" exclaimed Thornfield, with a heavy groan.

"You did; but of course you did not intend to do anything of the kind," replied Deck, who could not help thinking how he would have felt himself if he had done such a thing, even innocently.

"Them Seceshers is fighting for all they are wuth," said Life, who had been near enough to hear the farmer's story.

"Those Secessionists are fighting for all they are worth," corrected Deck; and the acting lieutenant repeated his remark in more correct form.

"What does it look like, Life?"

"It looks as though the enemy were about used

up," replied he, careful about his grammar and punctuation.

"As nearly as I can make it out, the enemy marched to the square in the middle of the village, where our three companies fell upon them," said the staff-officer, as he ascended to the hurricane deck, followed by Knox; for here they could obtain a better view of the battle than from the main deck.

They had hardly obtained a good position to witness the struggle, before the action appeared to have suddenly come to an end; and Deck had no doubt that Captain Altamont had surrendered. He had fought desperately, and the square was strewn with his own dead and wounded and those of the Union cavalry; and it was simply madness to continue to fight when he was surrounded by four times the number of his force.

"The affair seems to have been finished," said Deck to the pilot.

"It looks so; and the boat is not likely to get a cargo down the river from this town," replied the Dutch-German, who was nothing more than a Tennessean, as he afterwards admitted.

“You may run the boat up to the levee again, Mr. Kloots,” added Deck; and the pilot went to his quarters, and rang the bells to go ahead. “Your boat is safe; and you may thank your stars, if you have any stars, that she is so. On that long hill is a battery of artillery that could have knocked her into kindling-wood in five minutes. Your crowd had no kind of a chance here, and you had better have stayed at home.”

“What am I now?” asked the pilot more seriously than before.

“A Dutch-German, and a prisoner of war; for you were captured with the Harbinger in the service of the enemy. Where is the captain of the steamer?” asked Deck, who had seen no such personage so far as he knew.

The military prisoners on board who were not disabled had been ordered to take care of their wounded companions; and one of them reported that the commander of the boat was among the number. The gang-plank had been extended to the beach; and Lieutenant Herndon soon rode upon the deck, presumably with orders from the general.

CHAPTER VI

THE THOROUGH DEFEAT OF THE ENEMY

"WELL, Deck, what sort of a time have you had?" asked Lieutenant Herndon, as he galloped his horse up the steep gangway as his brother staff-officer came down from the hurricane deck.

"We have done all we were ordered to do; but perhaps we should have done more if there had been any new field for us to enter upon," replied Deck. "Is the general still perched upon that long hill?"

"No; he came down some time ago. In fact, he rode over into the village as soon as the three companies broke into the place. He saw and directed the action from the time the men became engaged, and he has just received the surrender of the enemy," answered Lieutenant Herndon.

"That was a foregone conclusion from the beginning," added Deck.

"It was; but the enemy fought as though they had all been tigers."

"I don't believe our men skulked," suggested the steamboat operator. "I wish I had been there."

"Perhaps you are inside of a whole skin because you did not happen to be there," said Herndon with a smile.

"This is the first action in which the River-lawns ever were engaged when I was not with them, and I am sorry I was left out on one side. But we had a pretty sharp fight in the stern of the steamer; for the guard left on board, with the captain of her, fought like a stack of wildcats, till they could not fight any more, and the sergeant in command was ready to surrender; but one of them would not, and jumped into the river, followed by four others," Deck explained.

"Then, it don't appear that you were on one side, Deck," added Herndon. "If you had not captured the steamer, some of the enemy might have escaped."

"If our men had let them do so," said Deck, with a smile. "But I did not see much of the

fight. Were you sent on board with any message from General Woodbine?"

"Not exactly with a message, but simply to ascertain the condition of things on board the steamer," replied the active staff-officer.

"Well, we have captured the Harbinger, and the small boat in which the signalman was operating; and we owe our good fortune in this affair to him, for he led the enemy into this trap."

"How was that?"

"You must excuse me, Frank; it is a long story, and I shall have to recite the whole of it to General Woodbine, when you will be likely to hear it," replied Deck. "I want to ask you how the Marion Cavalry behaved on the field."

"That's my old company, and I hope you haven't any doubt as to how they behaved; but I can truly say that they stood up to the work, and behaved as though they wanted to make martyrs of themselves in a holy cause. I observed them, and I can truly say they were as brave and plucky as the Riverlawns; and perhaps they were inspired to do so well by the brilliant fighting of Major Lyon's two companies."

“Thank you, Frank, for the compliment to the original Riverlawns,” returned Deck. “I have never seen the Marions in a fight, and I had some curiosity to know how they bore themselves.”

“I refer you to the general and the major for further information, for you may think I am prejudiced in favor of my old company. When the thing began to look very blue for the enemy, and they had been really whipped if they had only known it, the squad of cavalry they brought up from the boat suddenly attempted to escape by galloping down a side street. Captain Richland sent a platoon around by another street, and turned them back after a sharp little brush. They were bound for the steamer, and did not appear to be aware that she had been captured. But they might have recaptured the Harbinger if they had got on board of her.”

“Doubted ! ” exclaimed Deck. “I had a squad of twenty on the deck, who could have taken care of them ; but I should not have asked them to spill their blood. I should have simply hauled in the gang-plank, and backed the boat away from the beach.”

"Plenty of expedients in your busy head, Deck," laughed Herndon, as he began to wheel his horse towards the shore.

"Where is the general now, Frank?"

"I left him in the square in the centre of the village, receiving the thanks and congratulations of the town council."

"I don't know that I have anything more to do on board of this steamer, and Lieutenant Knox is abundantly able to take care of himself and the boat," said Deck, who regarded his mission on the river as finished, and was disposed to report to the general. "Good-evening, Artie," he continued, as his brother, the orderly of his father, rode up the gang-plank with his left arm in a sling.

"I am sorry you are wounded, Artie," said Lieutenant Herndon, as he rode down to the beach on the way to the commander of the force.

"So am I," added Deck, with abundant sympathy and sorrow in his face. "Is it a bad wound, Artie?"

"Not very bad, though it is rather painful. It was done with a bayonet; but Dr. Farnwright

says it is not serious, and will be well in a week."

"Why don't you go to your tent, and take it easy, Artie? There will be no more fighting here to-night, for it is almost dark," suggested Deck.

"I don't want to go on the sick-list as long as I can hold my head up. Father told me to go to my tent; but I begged off, and the general wanted me in the absence of his staff. He orders you to march your prisoners up to the square, those that are able to march, and to send the others up on boards or litters."

"I will give the order to Lieutenant Knox," added Deck, as his brother rode down the plank.

He sent a man for Life Knox, who was walking the whole length of the boat in his vigil over her and the prisoners. He delivered the order of General Woodbine to him, and directed him to carry it out at once. Four sentinels were stationed on the forecastle, and four more in the after part of the steamer, nominally as a guard over the wounded; but they were kind-hearted fellows, and were really taking care of them, giving them water, and whatever else they wanted.

Captain Hixton and the mate were both among them, and neither of them was likely to recover.

The rest of the troopers were scattered about at their leisure ; and their lieutenant summoned them to the fore-castle, and directed them to conduct the uninjured prisoners forward. There were only three of them, and as many cavalrymen brought them to the place indicated. The dozen men were then directed by Knox to bring some materials for stretchers, such as they could find in the cabin or elsewhere.

The men then tore out seven berths from the staterooms on the saloon-deck, and carried them to the sick-bay, which had been made out of the berth-sacks of the crew. The wounded were then placed on these stretchers, and two of them were carried by the four men who had been nurses rather than guards. Men were detailed to be the bearers of the other five ; and the procession was started for the square, with the three able prisoners, who needed no guards, for they could not run away if they tried.

“Is the pilot a prisoner, Lieutenant Lyon?” asked Life when he had sent away the others.

“Certainly; without him the enemy could have done nothing,” replied Deck, as Knox hailed Milton and Sluder on the hurricane deck, and told them to send down the pilot; and he and the assistant pilot came down, attended by the two non-commissioned officers.

“What is to become of me, Cap’n?” asked Thornfield, who had been seated on a barrel, doubtless ruminating upon the mischief he had done that day and the day and night before. “I reckon I may as well go home now.”

“I reckon not,” replied Deck, whom he had addressed.

“I am not a military man; I have not borne arms on either side,” protested the farmer.

“The more shame for you, an able-bodied man as you are!” said Deck, who could be as severe when occasion required as he was polite at other times.

“I have had to take care of my farm.”

“And raise grain, meat, horses, and mules for the Confederate army.”

“I haven’t raised any for them.”

“You preferred that they should help them-

selves at the barns and cribs of what you call your Yankee neighbors."

"But just look at it, Cap'n; I am a peaceable man, and you have no right to make a prisoner of war of me," argued the farmer.

"I won't argue the matter; Lieutenant Knox will send you to General Woodbine, and refer the case to him. If he chooses to let you go home he will; but he won't do it. And when I tell him what a serviceable steam-launch you have in the creek, I am sure he will want that, and any grain, meat, horses, and mules you have also. We need mules, for the roads are very bad at this season of the year."

"If you mean to persecute me, I suppose I can't help myself; but we shall have an army along here some time that will drive every one of you Yankees out of the State of Kentucky." Thornfield concluded with a bigger expletive than was at all necessary to meet even his condition.

"Well, Leftenant, what do you want of me?" demanded the pilot, presenting himself before Knox.

"Nothing at all, only to give you a little walk for exercise as far as the square of the town," replied Life.

"I don't think I need a walk after standing all night at the wheel of this boat," replied Mr. Kloots.

"I think you do, and I want you to join a little procession to the square; and I believe there is a jail there for your accommodation in case you make a row on the way," returned Knox.

"But I am not a soldier."

"You don't look like one. No talk here, Pilot; if you have got anything to say, get it off before General Woodbine. You fetched this boat up here, and I reckon you are as deep in the mud as the rest on 'em are in the mire. Form a line with the rest of the prisoners; you, too, t'other pilot."

A corporal and four men marched on the flanks of the party with drawn sabres in their hands, and the prisoners were not tempted to escape.

Leaving Lieutenant Knox and ten men on

board, including the two engineers and Sergeant Sluder, who knew something about a steamboat, for he had worked upon one on the Green River, Deck rode down the gang-plank, and made his way to the principal street of the town. It was beginning to be dark; and as he approached the square, where he had never been before, he saw a company of the Riverlawns on the flanks of a body of prisoners marching up towards the road to the camp.

Nearly or quite the whole of the population of Barkville were assembled in the square, which lay on both sides of the main street. He found General Woodbine with Herndon, and two companies of cavalry near them. As the young lieutenant rode into the square, the crowd cheered him vigorously, saying he was the officer who had captured the steamer; and he had become a hero without knowing it. He saluted the people, and moved on, blushing like a maiden at this mark of approbation; but it did not turn his head, nor even inflate his vanity.

“Good-evening, Lieutenant Lyon; you seem to be as good as new, and you do not appear

to be wounded," said the general as he came up to him.

"Not a scratch, General Woodbine."

"You have done your duty, as you always do; and I suppose Lieutenant Knox is in charge of the steamer."

"He is, sir. Her name is the Harbinger."

"The harbinger of defeat to the company she brought to this town. Is all well on board of her?"

"All is well; but I suppose Lieutenant Knox will need some instructions for the night," replied Deck.

"You may return to the camp that way, and give him my order to move the Harbinger out about three hundred feet, and anchor her there; I suppose she has an anchor," said the commander.

"I saw one on her forecastle, and Sergeant Sluder knows how to handle the craft," answered the staff-officer.

"Tell him to wait till I have provisions sent to him from the camp," added the general. "By the way, I have committed the engineer and the

other civilian to the jail. I know about the pilot, but who is the other man?"

"He is the signalman who was in the small boat. I have a long story he told me, to relate to you," replied Deck.

"I will hear that this evening in camp."

The staff-officer rode down to the Harbinger with the order of the general, delivered it, and then went to the camp.

CHAPTER VII

A VERY RHEUMATIC PATIENT

WHY General Woodbine ordered the Harbinger to be anchored in the stream he did not explain, though doubtless he had his reasons for doing so. Lieutenant Knox's men who had been sent on shore with the wounded and the prisoners had returned. One of his force had been killed and another wounded, the latter of whom had been sent to the square, where the general had established a hospital. The dead on both sides had been buried in the cemetery of the town.

No doubt there were Secessionists, perhaps many of them; but they did not flaunt their politics on the present occasion, for it was not a pleasant time to do so. The people of the town, including as many women as men, volunteered as nurses, and all the doctors assisted in the care of the wounded; and nothing at all was said in either hospital about the burning question that divided the people.

"You have comfortable quarters in the saloon of the steamer," said Lieutenant Lyon after he had delivered his orders.

"I reckon some of us will have to keep awake if we have beds to sleep in," replied Knox.

"You will have to have two sentinels on duty all night, and they ought to keep their eyes wide open," added Deck.

"I shall put one on the forecastle, and one at the stern on the main deck."

"I am confident there are plenty of disloyal people in this vicinity, and they may make an attempt in the night to recapture the Harbinger," suggested Deck.

"If they do, I reckon we can make it warm for them; but I wish I had a squad of them artillerymen here, for I have found a caisson of ammunition that belongs with the two guns on the forecastle."

"I will suggest the idea to General Woodbine, and perhaps he will send some of those artillerymen on board," replied Deck, as he wheeled his horse ready to leave.

Ceph felt his way down the gang-plank to the

beach, and then started off at a gallop up the narrow road under the long hill. Just as he reached the cliff he heard the sharp crack of a firearm, and felt a sharp tug at his cap. He did not like that way of doing things, and grasped his revolver. It was quite dark, and he could see no one near. But he turned his horse, and ran him around the corner of the hill. As he came to the road leading up to the one on which the camp was located, he discovered a man hastening into the village, which was only across the way. A light from a window enabled him to see that he had what appeared to be a rifle in his hand.

Deck fired off every shot in his revolver just as the man was dodging into a house, though with what effect he could not tell. This was not war; it was assassination, and it made the young man angry. The deed was unworthy of a soldier, and not one in a hundred thousand of the Southern army would have been guilty of such a treacherous act. The lieutenant carefully noted the appearance and locality of the house in which the ruffian had disappeared, and

then rode on towards the camp. But he had hardly started before he discovered a body of men with a wagon moving down the road. It was evidently the provisions, under convoy of a guard of troopers.

"Can you tell me, Sergeant Yowell, where General Woodbine happens to be just now?" asked Deck of the non-commissioned officer in charge of the guard.

"He is behind us with a guard on his way to the steamer," replied Yowell, saluting when he recognized the voice of the staff-officer.

Deck acknowledged the salute, and rode on.

"Who comes there?" demanded the leader of a squad of cavalry he next encountered in the road.

"Friend," replied Deck.

"Advance, friend, and give the countersign."

"Harbinger," added the staff-officer, who was the first one to receive it from the general as the darkness was gathering upon them.

"Pass, friend. Oh, it is Lieutenant Lyon!" exclaimed Blenks, who was in command of about half of his platoon, as he saluted him. "The

general will be glad to see you, for he has been inquiring for you."

Deck rode on till he came to the commander, who recognized him promptly in the darkness.

"What are you about, Lieutenant, riding around the town in the darkness? Are you alone?" demanded the general rather brusquely.

"I am alone; I have just come from the Harbinger, and I was fired at down at the foot of the hill," replied Deck lightly; for he was disposed now to make the best of the affair.

"I was going to say it served you right, but I won't say that; and it ought to be a warning to you. We can't afford to have good officers expose themselves unnecessarily," continued the commander. "Were you hit?"

"Not in the flesh and blood, but in my cap; there is a hole in it."

"It might have been a hole in your head!" exclaimed General Woodbine.

"But it was not;" and Deck proceeded to relate in what manner and where the hole had been made in his cap.

"Forward, Blenks! and stop at the foot of the

hill," said the commander; and there was that in his tones which indicated that he meant something to those within hearing. "There is here, as in every town on the border, a nest of disloyal ruffians; and if they want to shoot they had better go into the Confederate army. It is not safe for a soldier in uniform to ride about this town after dark, especially when it is as dark as it is to-night."

"It did not occur to me that there was any danger. I have a request to make from Lieutenant Knox, and I was thinking of that when I heard the crack of the rifle," added Deck.

"I have five and twenty men in my guard, and you might have had a dozen if you had asked Knox for them. What is his request?" asked the commander.

"As you are aware, the enemy left two field-pieces on the forecastle of the Harbinger, and he has found a caisson of ammunition for them. He requests that some artillerists may be sent to him."

"He shall have half the battery and two of the guns. They may as well be on the steamer

as in the camp, to which I ordered them when I went there. Lieutenant Herndon, request Captain Batterson to send two of his guns and half of his company to the steamer, and let his officer report to Lieutenant Knox, who is in command of the boat."

This officer saluted, and dashed back to the camp, where he and the general had been long enough to eat their supper; and Deck felt an aching void at his stomach, which reminded him that he had eaten nothing since dinner, and that his supper would not be unwelcome. At the foot of the hill Lieutenant Blenks halted his force, as he had been ordered. The rattling of the sabres and the tramp of the horses' feet had drawn a small crowd, principally negroes, mostly of the juvenile order, from the levee, where they had been watching the steamer.

Deck conducted the commander to the house in which the rifleman had disappeared. It was a wooden building, and looked as though it might be inhabited by respectable people.

"Who lives in that house, my boy?" asked the general of a little darky near him.

"Mars'r Sexton, sar," replied the boy.

"Sexton? Is he the sexton of the town, who buries people after they are dead?"

"No, sir; his name is Sexton," replied a white man who had just come on the ground.

"What is he? What sort of a man is he?" inquired General Woodbine.

"He keeps a store up in the square, and he is Secesh way up to the handle," answered the villager.

"And you are not Secesh?"

"No, sir! I belong to the Home Guard, not the State Guard; and my name is Limber. If I can do anything to assist you, sir, I am right ready to do it," replied the villager. "I am a tailor, and my shop is next to the jail. Just about dark Sexton came to the jail when I was standing there, and wanted to see Ethan Thornfield; and the jailer let him in. The two sentinels interfered; but the man in charge said he had an order, and they wanted to see it, but it was too dark to read it. Sexton stayed there about a quarter of an hour, and then he left the square. That's all I know about it."

"Thank you, Mr. Limber," said the general.

While this conversation was in progress, Lieutenant Blenks had surrounded Sexton's house with troopers. The commander and his staff-officer then rode to the front of the dwelling, followed by the tailor. The chief of the escort had already pounded on the front door with the handle of his sabre, but no one opened it. He repeated the summons several times with no different result.

"Break in the door!" ordered the commander.

Blenks dismounted four of his men to execute this order. Limber assisted them, and procured a round stick six inches in diameter from where a piece of bad road had been corduroyed; and the soldiers carried it to the house. With one blow of this battering-ram the door gave way; and the lieutenant, followed by his four dismounted men, entered the house.

"Is Mr. Sexton at home?" asked the officer of a woman who came rushing towards the door when the crash came.

"He is; but he can't be seen now, for he is sick abed," she replied, very much agitated.

"What is the matter with him?" demanded Blenks.

"He's got the rheumatis' so he can hardly move on his bed," answered the woman, who was probably his wife.

"How long has he been sick?"

"Taken this afternoon, and could hardly get into the house," said the woman, who presented a very respectable appearance.

"Perhaps I can do something for him, and I want to see him."

"You can't see him!" protested the wife of the sufferer. "Whoever heard the like? You break into a man's house, and you want to see one who is in the most intense pain."

"That's just the situation, ma'am," replied the lieutenant as coolly as he always discharged his duty.

"But I say you can't see him!" persisted Mrs. Sexton.

"And I say I can and I will see him," added Blenks. "If you don't step out of the way, I shall be reluctantly compelled to order my men to remove you."

“Are you a Christian man to do such a deed as this?” demanded the wife of the invalid.

“I am a Christian man, but not a Secesh Christian. I have no time to argue the question on theological grounds,” continued the lieutenant, as he pushed her aside, and placed one of his men near her. “Come with me, Peterson!”

The man indicated followed him, both with drawn sabres, into a room leading out of the rear of the hall, without the ceremony of knocking. On the bed lay a man, apparently about forty years old, writhing and groaning as though every bone in his body had been recently broken.

“Well, Mr. Sexton, how do you find yourself?” asked Blenks.

“Very bad; very bad indeed — oh, oh, oh!” groaned the sufferer. “Do you want to see me? Oh, oh, oh!”

“I wanted to inquire how your rheumatism was,” replied the lieutenant.

“It’s awful! Oh, oh, oh! I’m afraid it’s going to kill me this time,” yelled the patient; and he might have been heard by the troopers outside.

“But you have got too many bed-clothes on you, man. Pull them off, Peterson,” said the officer.

The cavalryman obeyed the order to the letter, assisted by the lieutenant; and Sexton lay on the bed clothed in nothing but his shirt. He ceased to howl then, and Blenks proceeded to examine his body. On the right thigh he found a bandage soaked in blood, and the sheet in the same condition.

“I thought you would feel better if we took off the bed-clothes,” said Blenks. “But where did you get that wound on your leg, Mr. Sexton? Rheumatism don’t break out in just that way.”

But the wounded man made no reply. Peterson had taken a rifle from a couple of pegs in the room, and with the ramrod found that it was not loaded. He had not had time to reload it after he had fired at Deck.

“I suppose you did it with that rifle?” suggested the lieutenant.

But Sexton made no reply; and leaving Peterson, Blenks sent the wife back to her charge, and went out to report to the general.

CHAPTER VIII

ON BOARD OF THE CAPTURED LAUNCH

GENERAL WOODBINE was becoming somewhat impatient at the prolonged absence of Lieutenant Blenks, and was on the point of sending one of the dismounted men to ascertain what he was doing, when he appeared at the door. But he was always disposed to be reasonable, and he found no fault.

“Have you court-martialled the man, Lieutenant?” asked the commander, when he came to the door, where he could be seen by the light of a fire the little darkies had kindled in front of the house.

“I have not; but the man’s wife would not let me into the room, and I had to force a passage,” replied Blenks. “Then Sexton had the rheumatism the worst kind, and I think you could hear him yell with the pain out here; and I had to cure him before I could do anything more.”

"Cure him! Do you mean to say you cured him of rheumatism in the time you have been in the house?" demanded the general.

"That is what I did; at least, the patient did not complain any more of rheumatism after I had treated him," replied the lieutenant as seriously as though he had been at a funeral.

"How did you treat him, to work such a wonderful cure?"

"I simply ordered Peterson to pull all the clothes from the bed; and when he lay there with nothing on but his shirt, I discovered a wound on the back of his right thigh, his garment and the sheet covered with fresh blood."

"That was certainly a wonderful cure," added the commander, laughing heartily, in which he was joined by all within hearing. "You say, Lieutenant Lyon, that you emptied your revolver upon him in the pursuit you made of him?"

"I did, sir; and though it was very dark, I thought I must have hit him in firing so many times," replied Deck.

"I found the rifle in the room, and the barrel was empty," said Lieutenant Blenks.

“I did not give him time to load it again; and if it had been ten rods farther, I should have run him down with my horse,” added Deck.

“Put two reliable men in the house, Lieutenant Blenks, to prevent the escape of the assassin, for we shall want him in the morning,” said the commander.

“Corporal Kinnell and Peterson, now in the house, may attend to this duty,” said the lieutenant.

Blenks formed his men again; and they marched down to the levee, where the wagon and its guard had already arrived, and the men were eating their supper by the light of a fire in one of those iron baskets used on Western steamboats in the night to enable the hands to do their work at the landings. Lieutenant Knox presented himself promptly before the general as he rode upon the forecastle attended by his aid.

The military commander of the boat received his instructions after he had reported that nothing had transpired.

“Lieutenant Lyon, I think I should feel better

if you remained on board of the Harbinger to-night," said the general, after he had been silent for some time, as though he was engaged in reflection over the situation.

"I am perfectly willing to remain on board, sir. I should be as comfortable here as in the tent, and I am willing to admit that I am very tired," replied Deck.

"You can take a stateroom" —

"Boat coming alongside!" called the sentinel in the after part of the steamer.

"Where from?" demanded Knox.

"From down the river," replied the sentinel.

"It is a steam-launch."

"Send the launch forward," added the lieutenant in command.

"I don't believe there is more than one steam-launch in this part of the country," said General Woodbine. "It must be Thornfield's craft."

Deck had told the commander the substance of the farmer's story, though not in detail, for the want of time. Presently the little steamer appeared abreast of the forecastle. It contained three negroes, one of whom was nearly white,

and he seemed to be the engineer. Knox went to the side as soon as the craft appeared.

"What do you want?" demanded the lieutenant.

"Missus sent the boat down for Mars'r Thornfield," replied the engineer.

"Missus will have to get along without him for a while," interposed the general. "Thornfield is shut up in the jail."

"Lord o' massy! What's that for, Mars'r?" exclaimed the man with a nearly white face.

"You needn't ask any questions, for you were with him on his trip down the river when he went for the steamer to attack this place. If you were not a servant who had to obey your master's orders, I should have you taken on the same charge," replied the commander.

"In that case I have to go back and tell missus about it," added the engineer, apparently confounded by the situation.

"You will not go back in that boat," said the commander. "Take possession of it, Lieutenant Knox."

The sentinel who had taken the painter when

it was thrown on deck by one of the other two men hauled it taut, and made it fast. Knox ordered the three men on deck, and they promptly obeyed his order.

“Wot we gwine to do now, Mars’r?” asked one of the men, who was more nearly a pure African; and the lieutenant looked to the general to answer this question.

“We take possession of the boat because it was used yesterday in a treasonable enterprise; and we shall make a better use of it than the owner did,” said the commander. “You three can go where you please; we don’t want anything of you.”

General Woodbine, who had left his escort on the levee, then descended the gang-plank, and returned to the camp, leaving Deck on the boat; and his first business was to get his supper, for he was about as hungry as a lieutenant at eighteen could be. Life had not finished his supper when the general arrived, and the staff-officer joined him. The cooks in the camp had given the soldiers a feast; for the commissary officer had bought several calves at the slaughter-

house near the village, and the troopers had fried veal for supper; and a quantity of this viand had been sent down to the Harbinger.

The cook and a few waiters had been left on the steamer; and the supper had been kept hot in the kitchen by the former, while the latter had been pressed into the service of the force on board. The negroes were all Union men, even those who were too much attached to the families to leave them. Life called his waiter, and required him to bring his supper from the kitchen. They ate their fill, and talked themselves empty over the meal; but Deck was himself again when it was finished.

Then they went up into the saloon, and selected a couple of staterooms; and the waiter in charge there gave Deck the bridal chamber. From the servants, who were disposed to conciliate their new masters, they learned all about the steamer, and the condition of things down the river. General Crittenden had gone to Nashville; but two of the steamers which had been sent to Gainsboro for the use of his army had not been needed, and the saloon steward said they had been

sent up the river with a force on board of each for a foraging-expedition; for supplies were very scarce after the army had passed through the country.

“Two steamers!” exclaimed Deck.

“Yes, sir,” replied the steward, who appeared to be a very intelligent man, and willing to tell all he knew about the army of the enemy. “The other is the New Moon; but she had to wait till they could get provisions enough for the soldiers and crew up the river.”

“Then, she has not got into Kentucky yet?”

“Not yet, sir.”

This was valuable information to the officers; and Deck immediately wrote a note to General Woodbine, in which it was embodied. The artillery had not yet arrived; but the writer was confident that the force on board could defend the Harbinger if she was attacked in the night after it came. This note was sent by a couple of troopers; and then Deck and Life walked all over the steamer, to see that everything was in order.

They found nothing to vex their spirits till they came to the steam-launch made fast at the

forecastle. The iron basket had been replenished with light wood, and the forward part of the boat was well illuminated. On the stern was painted the name of Hephzibah, which was probably the name of the owner's wife or daughter. It was certainly Scriptural; and Deck wondered if they pronounced it "Hipsy," as he had heard it called in New Hampshire.

"What has become of those three darkies?" asked Deck.

"I reckon they went on shore, for I heard one of them say they would have to huf it home," replied Life.

"I am afraid they will not 'huf' it home to-night," added Deck, as he let himself down into the launch, and was followed by the tall Kentuckian." The engineer is a bright fellow; and I am inclined to believe he don't mean to go home without this boat, and we must contrive to disappoint him."

"If I was in his place I shouldn't want any better job than to get possession of this craft some time in the night in spite of sentinels and sabres," said Life.

"No more should I," answered Deck. "Fronklyn and I did a job of the same kind not long ago at the Beech Grove camp of the enemy. There is something forward that does duty as a cabin, and I suppose Thornfield slept in it on his trips up and down the river. I will sleep in that cabin to-night, Life."

"You, Deck!" exclaimed Knox, as the former went forward to look into the apartment. "Alone?"

"No; I will take Drye with me," replied Deck, as he opened the door of the cabin.

It was a snug little apartment with two berths, one on each side. He struck his cap against a lantern suspended from the ceiling. Life lighted the lamp in it, and they had a good view of the cabin. The beds were good, and were made up with all the appliances used in a chamber. It looked like very comfortable quarters to those who had been accustomed to sleeping on the ground, sometimes with plenty of straw, and sometimes without anything but a blanket. There was even a table turned up against the forward end of the cabin.

"I can sleep like a bug in a rug in here," said Deck when he had completed his survey.

"I should think you might," added Life. "But there is no need of a member of the general's staff doing this kind of duty when we have plenty of men on board of the steamer."

"It pleases my fancy to do so, and I am tired enough to sleep like a coon at noonday," replied Deck; and that settled it.

A thundering racket, with the shouts of officers on shore, caused them to hasten to the deck of the Harbinger. They found the entire battery of Captain Batterson on the beach, ready to march on board. The men were dismounted; and each of the four guns was drawn by only two horses, instead of six, which the bad condition of the roads required. A conference of all the officers was now the first thing to be had. The captain of the company of artillery was now the ranking-officer, though a staff-officer could take the command if he decided that it was necessary for him to do so; but they had no difficulty about this matter, though a note from the general, delivered by Captain Batterson, required him to

assume command of the steamer and her forces if the occasion demanded it.

The guns were disposed upon the main deck by the captain of the battery; and except a guard, the troop were sent to the cabin to sleep.

Deck decided to move the Hipsy to the stern of the steamer, and he went on board of her with Drye. They talked a while, and then turned in, each taking a berth in the cabin. Both of them were tired enough to drop asleep instantly. The night was cool, and Deck closed the cabin-door without disturbing himself at all in regard to the subject of ventilation. It would have been wise for him to ask Knox for a sentinel to be placed in the stern of the boat; but he did not think of it, for he did not consider that he was engaged in a dangerous enterprise. He slept like a tired young fellow, and Drye like one a little older.

They had slept till nearly daylight when the engineer spoke to Deck, and declared that the launch was underway.

CHAPTER IX

THE NEW MOON RISES ON THE HIPSY

LIEUTENANT LYON awoke at once when Corporal Drye spoke to him, and immediately realized that the Hipsy was in motion; for he could not only feel the vibration of the boat, but he could hear the thump of the propeller. He jumped out of bed, and proceeded to dress himself, for he had retired for the night just as though he had been in his own chamber at Riverlawn; while his companion was not obliged to perform this ceremony, for he had turned in just as he did when he slept on the ground.

The light had gone out, and the cabin was as dark as "a stack of black cats." But Deck was not a dude, and he had no difficulty in dressing himself in the gloom of the morning. He had no idea what time it was, whether it was last night or this morning. In two minutes he was ready for business, and there seemed to be some on hand

to be done. Of course the conclusion of the lieutenant was that the negro engineer of the farmer had taken the boat, though some other person might have captured her.

Deck could tell precisely how it had been done, though he had slept like a log through the whole of the operation. The negro had swum out to the craft, cast off the fast that held her to the Harbinger, and permitted the current to float her down the river till it was safe for him to climb on board of her. It was easy enough, and Deck had depended upon the sentinel at the stern of the steamer to watch the boat.

"We will have her back to her berth very soon, Drye," said he, as he took hold of the handle of the door. "Don't speak till we find who is in possession of the craft."

He spoke in a whisper; but the cabin was in the forward part of the launch, the engine was a little abaft the middle, and the wheel was at the stern instead of in the bow, where it is usually placed. Deck stooped and crept out of the cabin. The day was just breaking in the east, and it was not so dark as it had been. A man

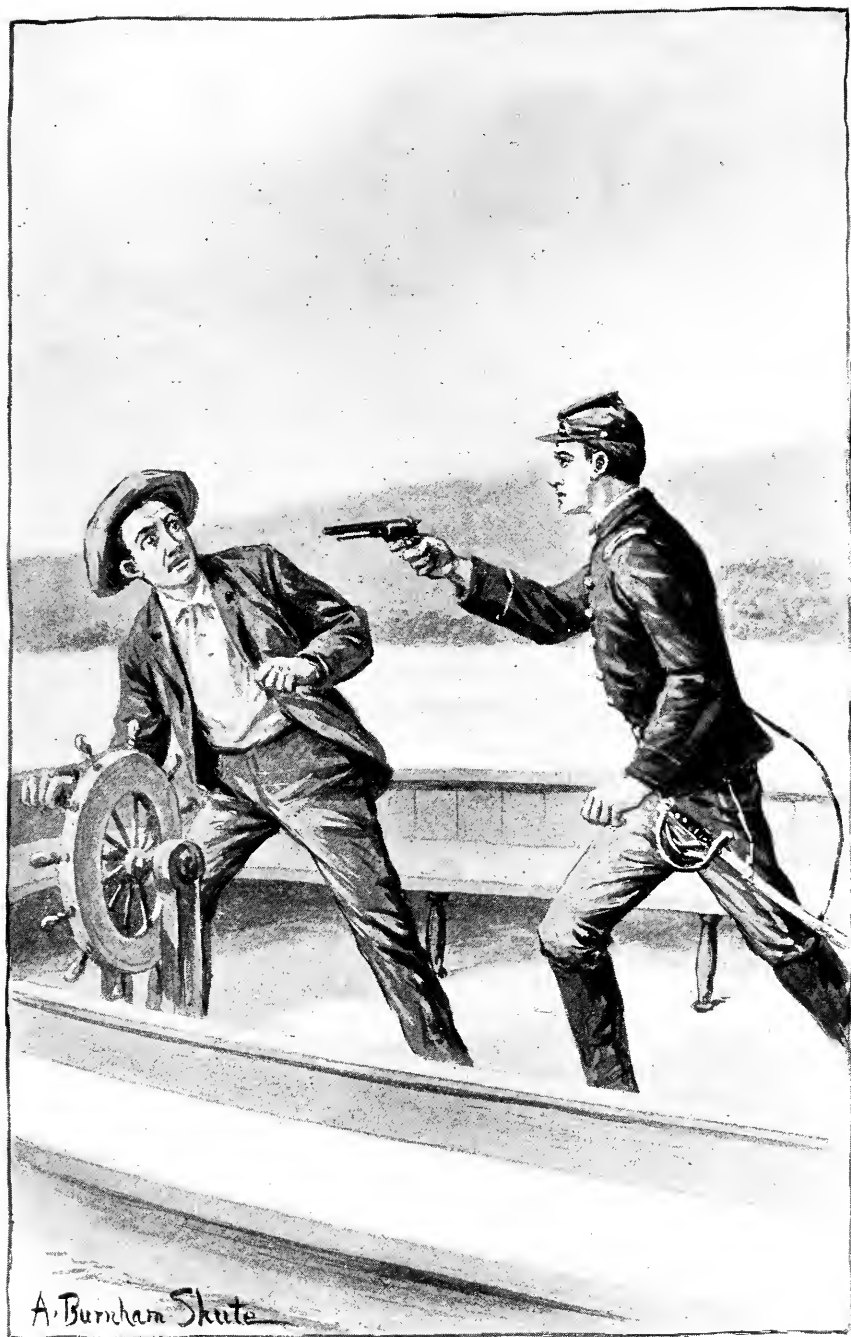
was at work on the furnace, and appeared to be on his knees, cleaning out the grate.

At the wheel stood a man dressed in a blue blouse or jumper; and this was the dress of Thornfield's engineer, so that he had no difficulty in recognizing him, even in the dim light of the morning. Deck had his revolver in his hand; and the first intimation he gave of his presence was by firing a shot at the engineer, who was now at the wheel. But he fired over the man's head; for he did not intend to kill or even wound him, unless he showed fight.

"Gorra mighty!" yelled the one at the furnace. "Don't shoot, Mars'r!"

Deck walked aft as far as the wheel, taking no notice of the frightened fellow at the engine. He pointed his weapon at the engineer, who was the active spirit of the enterprise.

"It is not necessary to shoot me, Mars'r," said the present helmsman, who was as near a white man as he could be and still be a negro. "I give it up. I wanted the boat, and I took her because she will be a great loss to Mars'r Thornfield; but I give her up now. I did not know



“Deck had his revolver in his hand.”

Page 118.



anybody was on board of her. I only do my duty to mars'r."

"I don't blame you, for I should have done the same if I had been in your place," replied Deck, taking a just view of the situation. "But you are bound to have the launch; and as I am not in your place, I shall take care that you don't get hold of her again. I will take the wheel myself."

"I will steer her for you, Mars'r," added the engineer.

"I will not trouble you to do so," replied the lieutenant, taking hold of the spokes.

Corporal Drye had gone to the engine, and sent the African there to the bow of the boat, where he could not get up any conspiracy with his companion. He went to work first at the furnace, and did his work more thoroughly than the negro; for the coal did not burn at all freely, and the craft was not making more than four miles an hour. Drye had banked the fire the night before, and the man had not properly opened it.

"More steam, Corporal!" called Deck to his cabin-mate. "We are moving at a snail's pace."

"I am trying to get a little more warmth in the boiler, for the steam is very low; I've got the clinkers out, and she will steam better in a few minutes," replied the white engineer.

"What is your name?" asked Deck, turning to the man he had displaced at the wheel.

"My name is Cephas, sir; but they all call me 'Seef,'" answered the man.

"Well, Seef, you have nothing more to do, and you may sit down and make yourself comfortable," added the lieutenant.

"I can't make myself very comfortable now I've lost the boat again," answered Seef, as he seated himself on the cushioned transom that extended around the stern of the craft.

"Are you a slave?"

"I am, Mars'r."

"Then, I shouldn't suppose you would care much for the property of your master."

"I take care of it just as if it were my own, sir. I would like my freedom; but mars'r and all the family treat me kindly, and I would not leave them, even to be free," replied Seef.

"You seem to be a very intelligent fellow;

can you read and write?" asked Deck, much interested in the man.

"I can, sir; and my mars'r winked at it. He always trusted me. He has sent me down to New Orleans before the war with fourteen horses to sell; and I sold them all, and brought back the draft for the money," ¹ said Seef proudly.

"You have been a useful man to your master?"

"I tried to be, sir. What are you going to do with me, Mars'r?"

This question was doubtless called forth by the course of the Hipsy; for Deck had thrown the wheel over, and headed her for the Tennessee shore. He did not choose to answer the question, and he simply evaded it.

The speed of the launch rapidly increased under the experienced management of Corporal Drye; and by the time she was approaching the other side of the stream, Deck estimated that she was making eight knots an hour; and Seef

¹ The author met this man, or one on the same errand, at the mouth of the Cumberland River, some forty years ago; and he was a slave.

claimed that he had made nine in her between two points that distance apart.

“Where did you learn to run a steam-engine, Seef?” asked the lieutenant, in order to change the subject of the conversation.

“The engineer that brought the boat up from where she was built taught me to run her, and to take the machine all to pieces. Mars’r brought me a book from Nashville about engines, and I have studied it a great deal.”

“Do you see any landing-place, Corporal?” asked Deck, as they approached the high bank on the Tennessee side.

“A cat could not climb up that bank,” replied the acting engineer.

“You are going to land me and Jake over here, Mars’r?” asked Seef, with a very lugubrious face.

“I don’t like to leave you on the other side, where you can get at this boat again. You are altogether too smart to lie around loose in these times,” replied Deck. “I dare say you will find a chance to get across the river; but I advise you not to meddle with the Hipsy, for we shall not let you off so easy next time you take her.”

"No ferry here now, Mars'r, and I don't know how we can get across," said Seef.

"You will find a way," added Deck lightly.

"We shall both starve to death over here," suggested the engineer.

"Have you no provisions on board?"

"Plenty of bacon and crackers."

"Take all you want, Seef."

"Thank you, sir," replied Seef, his face brightening up at once; and he admitted that he had eaten nothing since his dinner the day before, for the crew of the boat had not had their supper when the craft was captured.

"I don't want to starve you; and you can take the provision, leaving enough for our breakfast."

"You are very kind, Mars'r. If you go down the river about half a mile you will come to a creek, with a landing-place a little way up," added Seef. "I will steer the boat to it if you wish."

"No; you and Jake may get your breakfast now, and I shall get along very well at the wheel," replied Deck.

Seef went to the cabin, and took from a locker a ham from which not more than a couple of slices

had been cut. It had been boiled, and was all ready for use. On the cabin table he took off three large slices, and put them on a plate. Then he filled a dish with crackers, and placed both on a tray, flanking them with mustard and pickles. Carrying it to the standing-room where the wheel stood, he exhibited it to the lieutenant, wishing to know if that was enough for himself and the engineer.

"Plenty, plenty, Seef; more than we need," replied Deck, pleased with the good will of the man, and almost sorry that he had decided to banish him from his own side of the river. "Leave the tray on the table in the cabin, and you and Jake can take your breakfast now."

"Thank you, sir."

Seef was a slave then, though his nominal freedom came to him within another year, under the President's Proclamation; but he was a gentleman in spite of his condition. When Deck saw the man carrying the ham and crackers to the bow to which Jake had been banished, he shouted to him that they might eat their breakfast in the cabin.

"Mars'r Thornfield don't allow his niggers to

eat in the cabin," said Seef, after he had returned the provisions to the cabin, and called Jake.

"Thornfield is not in command here just now," replied Deck.

"You are very good, Mars'r, to us niggers."

"You are no more a nigger than I am, Seef; you would pass for a white man," protested the lieutenant.

"Nigger all the same, Mars'r, though I passed for a white man in New Orleans," answered the intelligent contraband. "I could make some coffee for you and the engineer, Mars'r, if you wish."

"It would be the right thing to have at this time in the morning."

"Then I will make it," said Seef, as he joined Jake at the cabin-door.

Even before he ministered to his hunger, he brought out an iron furnace, which he placed on the sheet-iron stand by the side of the boiler, and made a charcoal fire in it. Then he placed a tea-kettle of water on it, and went back to the cabin, where he and his dusky companion had no excuse for not eating all they wanted. The good behavior of Seef produced no little relenting on the

part of the lieutenant in his purpose to leave him in Tennessee; for it might be a long time before he found an opportunity to cross the river.

Before the two finished their meal, Deck discovered the mouth of the creek; but at about the same moment he saw a steamer, on the front of whose pilot-house he could just make out the name, "New Moon." This was rather an appalling sight to him, and he concluded that there would be "music" off the town of Barkville by breakfast-time, or sooner; and he was sorry that he was not on board of the Harbinger, to take part in the conflict, if there should be one.

But the mouth of the creek was at hand, and the New Moon could not follow the Hipsy up a small stream. Deck felt a very considerable diffidence in having the boat revealed to the people on board of that steamer; and he threw over the wheel, and ran behind the bend, beyond which he had made her out. A new moon is a very pleasant sight to see, especially to those who like to look at it over the right shoulder; but this particular New Moon was regarded as a dangerous nuisance to Deck and the corporal, for she

would not hesitate to capture the little Hipsy, and to make prisoners of both the white men on board of her. The colored people being in the cabin could not see her yet.

Before she passed around the bend, Deck had hurried the launch into the creek; and fortunately there was a change in its direction not a quarter of a mile from the river. Behind this Deck rang the bell to stop the engine. As soon as he could find a good place he started her again, and ran her into a clump of bushes till her keel grounded forward.

"I suppose you saw that steamer, Lieutenant Lyon?" said Corporal Drye, going aft from the engine.

"I did; but I said nothing, for I did not care to inform that bright white ducky of her presence so near us. They are practically fighting on the other side, and they may be guilty of some treachery, though I have treated Seef like a gentleman and a white man," replied Deck. "I expected that steamer some time; but I would rather not have seen her at just this time, for she would be an ugly customer for us."

“That’s a fact, Lieutenant. We are in an ugly scrape, and the next thing is to get out of it,” said Drye, as Seef made the coffee at the furnace.

Whether they got out of it or not, Deck was determined to have his breakfast; and he led the way to the cabin.

CHAPTER X

THE LAUNCH IN A TIGHT PLACE

SEEF and Jake had set the table in the cabin, and placed everything the limited larder of the boat afforded, including a pot of hot coffee, which they were obliged to take without milk; though this was no hardship to soldiers, who are accustomed to get along without it. Though they had taken a rather late supper, they were hungry enough to make a hearty meal.

"There were three of you in the boat when you came alongside the Harbinger last night," said Deck to Seef, who waited on the table, doubtless just as he had upon his master at other times.

"Buck can't swim, and he was afraid to come with us. I reckon he is over on the shore, waiting for the boat to come along," replied Seef. "He can huf it home when he gets tired of waiting."

"All right; we won't worry about him. I didn't know but he was drowned; for I suppose you two had to swim out to the launch when you took her," added Deck.

"Yes, sir; we swam out to the boat, let go the fast, and hung on to her till she was out of hearing of the steamer, carried down the river by the current."

The two soldiers made a hearty meal; and the boys cleared away the dishes, and put the cabin in order. Deck and Drye went aft, and seated themselves on the divan around the wheel. They felt like a couple of mice caught in a box-trap. To go out into the river was to court capture. Everything depended upon the movements of the New Moon. If she discovered that the Harbinger was a prize to the military force, she would probably attempt to recapture her, Deck stated.

"No fellow can find out what she will do," added Corporal Drye.

"We are shut in here, and we can see nothing on the river," said Deck. "If we leave the launch, Seef is smart enough to run away with her."

“That is so; but why can’t we divide the question?”

“What do you mean by dividing the question?” asked the lieutenant.

“One of us can go on shore, get to the top of that hill at the bend, and from there he can see up the river as far as the town,” replied Drye. “The other will stay in the launch, and a revolver will insure her safety.”

“That’s the idea, Corporal! Which of us shall land?”

“That is for you to decide, Lieutenant Lyon,” answered Drye.

“As you suggested the idea, I will leave you to do the scouting,” said Deck. “Seef and Jake know nothing about the New Moon; they did not see her, for both of them were in the cabin. They will not make any trouble while you are gone.”

“I don’t think they will, Lieutenant. They are both asleep now, Seef in the cabin, and Jake in the bow. You can see the hill very plainly from here,” said Drye, pointing to it.

“It is quite a sightly place, and I wonder

some Tennessean of taste has not built a house on it," suggested Deck.

"I can see the town from it, and that is all I want of it," replied Drye. "I was going to say that when I get on that hill, you can see me, and I will make a signal to you."

"What for?"

"I have an idea that the New Moon will see the Harbinger anchored off the levee, and she will go on to Creelsboro before she does any business. The two steamers are on the same mission up the river, and one will not care to meddle with the other. If I find the New Moon has gone by the town, I will make a signal to you by waving my handkerchief over my head; and you can wake Seef, and run the launch down to a point near the river and pick me up."

"All right; and I will do so. But suppose she has stopped near the town to look into the situation?" asked Deck.

"Then, I will not make any signal at all, but come back as I went," answered the corporal.

"All understood," added the lieutenant.

Drye went forward. The shore looked like a

quagmire; but the branch of a large tree growing in the water that flooded the low ground at its present high stage of the river extended over the forward part of the boat. Taking hold of this limb, he deftly climbed into the tree, and made his way to the higher ground. Then he disappeared in the grove that lay beyond it. Deck permitted the negroes to sleep, for Seef said they had been up all night.

The lieutenant had been listening for the last hour, in the expectation of hearing the sound of guns from the direction of Barkville; but as none were heard, he concluded that the New Moon had gone on her way up the river. Seef had behaved so well that he had concluded to land him and his companion on the Kentucky side of the river, and that the Hipsy should be more carefully guarded another night.

In about half an hour after the departure of the corporal, Deck saw him on the summit of the hill. Without his field-glass he could see him distinctly; for the morning was clear and bright, and the sun was half an hour high. Drye walked about for a few minutes after he was seen, evi-

dently making his observations from different points of view. There was no part of the river within five miles up the stream that the scout could not see except at a bend directly opposite the lower end of the long hill.

It was only a gentle curve; but the New Moon might have crawled in close to the Tennessee side, where she would have been out of sight. This was the only point where the corporal could not see her; but even if she were there, the observer reasoned that the Hipsy would have time to get out of the creek, and run over to Marrow Creek, on which Thornfield lived, before the enemy's steamer could overtake her; and he made the signal agreed upon.

The town was about a mile above the mouth of the stream where the launch had taken refuge. The possibility that the New Moon had put in at the cove opposite the town was a vexatious problem to the lieutenant, who had studied the contour of the shores of the river; and he knew that the corporal could not see her if she hauled up there. But it was the time for action; for if there was to be a fight, either on

shore or between the steamers, his services would be needed there; and he went to the cabin and called Seef.

“Anything the matter, Mars’r?” asked the white negro, springing to his feet, and staring earnestly into the face of the officer.

“Nothing the matter, Seef; but I think we will get out of this creek, and I want you to stir up the fire in the furnace, and put on all the steam she will bear,” replied Deck.

The engineer had no toilet to make; and he hastened to the engine at once, without pausing to ask any questions. There appeared to be no indication of treachery on the part of the contraband, and he went to work at the furnace with as much zeal as though he had been a free man. When he had cleaned out the grate, and put fresh coal on the fire, he had nothing more to do; and he looked about him, glancing in at the door of the cabin. Then he went forward, and finding Jake alone there, he did not disturb him.

“Where is Mars’r Corporal, Mars’r?” he inquired, approaching the lieutenant, who had seated himself near the wheel.

“He has gone on shore, and I saw him on the top of that hill just before I called you,” replied Deck. “He has gone to take a look at the river, to see that all is clear.”

“The river is all there, and of course it is all clear, Mars’r,” said Seef.

“You don’t know; you are a Secessionist, and” —

“No, sir!” exclaimed Seef, with more vigor than his companion had before heard him speak. “I am not a Secesher. I stick by my mars’r and the family; but I don’t have anything to do with the war, and I’m no Secesher any more’n you be, Mars’r.”

“Wouldn’t you hand the corporal and me over to the enemy if you had the chance?” asked Deck.

“No, sir; I would not!” protested the contraband warmly.

“Not to save yourself by getting away from us?”

“No, sir! My mars’r knows I’m a Union man.”

“A Union man working on the side of the

enemies of the United States!" exclaimed Deck, laughing at the oddity of the idea.

"I don't fight on the Secesh side, Mars'r."

"None of your people do any fighting on either side in this part of the country. I said working on the side of the Secessionists, not fighting; and that is about the same thing. You ran the engine of this boat for your master to go down the river in order to bring up a force to sack the town of Barkville," Deck explained.

"I couldn't help doing that, Mars'r Lieutenant. I am a slave, and I have to do what Mars'r Thornfield tells me; and he is very kind to me."

"I suppose you are a creature of circumstances just now; but we will not argue that matter. Then, you would not hand me and the corporal over to our enemies?"

"No, sir!"

"But you would to recover possession of your master's steam-launch?" suggested Deck.

"I would get the boat if I could, but I would not fight with you for it, Mars'r," replied Seef, with some hesitation. "You have treated me

very kindly, Mars'r Lieutenant, and though I want to save my mars'r's property, I wouldn't do anything to harm you, sir; I would not as I hope to go to heaven when I die!"

"I understand you now, Seef, and I know you are between two wheels turning in opposite directions," said Deck sagely. "Your affections make you cling to your master, though you would work on the Union side if you could."

"That's it, Mars'r; but we have plenty of steam, sir," said the engineer; and he moved forward to the machine, and tried the gauge-cocks.

"I may want to run her at her best speed, Seef, and you need all the steam you can get," added Deck, who had entire confidence in the engineer by this time, within the limits he had indicated.

"She shall go nine miles an hour; and that is her best, Mars'r."

"How fast can the steamers that come up the river go, Seef?" asked Deck.

"Some eight miles an hour, some twelve or more," replied the engineer.

"Do you know the New Moon?"

“Yes, Mars’r, very well; and she makes ten miles, and more if they hurry her.”

She was too fast for the Hipsy if she should happen to encounter her; but Deck went forward, and cast off the line by which the boat was secured, ordering Seef to back her. Putting the helm to port, she was backed up the stream till she was headed for the river, when the crank was reversed, and she went ahead. Not a great distance down the creek she picked up the corporal; and then Seef was instructed to let her do her best. In a few minutes she was in sight of the Cumberland.

“Seef seems to be doing very well at the engine,” said Drye, as he seated himself on the divan.

“I am confident that he will not go back on us,” replied Deck. “I have had some talk with him; and though he means to stick to his master, he declared that he would not give us up to the enemy, even if he had a chance, which he has not.”

“I would not trust him out of sight,” added the corporal.

"I don't intend to do so," said the lieutenant. "By the great horn spoon!" he suddenly exclaimed, as he gave the wheel a sharp turn, "we are in for it now!"

"That's so!" ejaculated the corporal, as he whipped out his revolver from the case at his belt.

"You won't need that," interposed the lieutenant.

"There is a ball in it for Seef if he don't behave himself."

"He will behave himself. How deep is the water on the port side, Seef?" asked Deck.

"Steep bank, sir; go within six feet of the shore," replied the engineer.

All these exclamations and movements had been called forth by the appearance of the New Moon, which was slowly working her way into the creek where the Hipsy had been concealed. She was close to the right bank, while the launch hugged the left; and it was hardly supposable that the latter would be allowed to pass her without a challenge, and Deck was working his wits for all they were worth.

CHAPTER XI

AN IMPENDING BATTLE ON THE RIVER

THE mouth of the Tennessee creek was quite wide for such a small stream, perhaps two hundred feet; and the steamer and the launch had plenty of room to pass each other if the New Moon did not object. She had kept as close to the shore as the depth of water would permit, and was going very slowly, in order not to stick too hard if she took the ground.

"Have you got all the steam you can make, Seef?" asked Deck, while the steamer was still three hundred feet from the launch.

"Yes, Mars'r; she is doing all she can now," replied the engineer.

"Did you see the New Moon after you went on the hill, Corporal?" the skipper inquired.

"I did not see her at all; I don't understand it," replied Drye, evidently very much mortified to find that his journey to the top of the eleva-

tion amounted to nothing at all, and that he had given the signal when he ought not to have done so. "I had a good view of all the river from the bend below where the Harbinger was concealed to a point above the town, except a small space right opposite the village."

"And that small space is plainly the portion where she was lying," replied the lieutenant. "I was thinking with all my might about that; and if she escaped your observation, I was sure she must be in that curve. Of course you are not in fault, for it was not possible to see her under that high bank."

"I could have seen her if there had not been another hill on the right bank of this creek."

"Well, here we are, and it is useless to cry about it; we are in the scrape, and all we have to do is to get out of it," added Deck, bringing all the philosophy in his composition to bear upon the situation.

"Don't you think I had better take the engine, Lieutenant Lyon?" asked the corporal in a very low tone.

"I don't think so. Seef knows the machine

better than you do, and he is making the launch do her best," answered Deck. "You may keep your eye upon him; and if you see him doing anything out of the way, tell me of it, Corporal, but don't say anything to him."

"All right, Lieutenant; just as you say;" but it was evident that he had no confidence in the engineer, and believed he could do the work better himself.

"We will not talk any more, but we must keep our eyes wide open. The New Moon has stopped her wheels, and there is a crowd of soldiers in gray on her forward deck," continued Deck, with his gaze fixed on the space between the launch and the left bank of the creek, with an occasional glance at the craft of the enemy. "She is not more than a hundred feet from us, and the time for action has come. The soldiers are watching us with all their eyes."

On the forecastle the lieutenant saw two field-pieces; and probably she and the Harbinger had divided a light battery between them. Both of them were pointed directly ahead; but the Hipsy had passed out of range of them while they re-

mained in their present position. Of course they could be swung around so as to bear on the launch; but in a minute or two more she would be abreast of the enemy, where she could do nothing with her guns without changing her position.

Seef was silent; but he kept a sharp lookout at the New Moon, though he did not withdraw his attention from the engine. The machine was hissing with the pressure of steam upon her, shaking and rattling, so that Deck was satisfied that the boat was doing her best.

“Launch, ahoy!” shouted an officer on the boiler-deck of the enemy.

“On board the steamer!” replied Deck, who had learned a little nautical phraseology from the books he had read.

“What boat is that?” demanded the soldier.

“The Hipsy of Marrow Creek,” replied the lieutenant at a venture.

“Come alongside, and give an account of yourselves!” shouted the officer.

“Excuse me; but the owner, Mr. Ethan Thornfield, who has just come up from down the river,

is in a hurry for his launch," replied Deck in as loud tones as he could muster.

"Come alongside, or we will fire into you!" yelled another man, who looked as though he might be the captain of the force.

"Can't stop!" returned Deck.

"Does the owner of that launch employ hands that wear a Federal uniform?" demanded the military officer in tones that were intended to be decidedly cutting.

Deck was assured that it was useless to equivocate, though it is the business of the commander on sea or land to deceive the enemy; and his conscience would not have troubled him if there had been any chance of success in his attempt to escape by stratagem, though in his ordinary relations with his fellow-beings he was high-toned and entirely truthful. His own and the corporal's uniform had betrayed them; and strategy was "played out," so far as the present adventure was concerned.

Though the officer on the New Moon continued to shout after him, he took no further notice of him in his individual capacity, especially as the

Hipsy had secured a position where the field-pieces could not be brought to bear upon her. Seef kept the boat moving at her highest speed, and even the corporal had begun to unbend towards the bondman who ran the machine.

"Can you make out what that officer says, Corporal?" asked Deck, when the boat was out of the reach of the guns, for the speaker stood on the forecastle.

"He is threatening to fire on the Hipsy; that is all I can understand," replied Drye. "But we are getting out of the way, for this craft is making not less than nine miles an hour."

"That is what Seef says she can do, and I am glad she is doing it," returned the lieutenant. "It looks to me just as though we were getting out of the scrape. I suppose General Woodbine has been informed before this time that the New Moon has been in front of the town."

"Perhaps not," suggested the corporal.

"I have no doubt he is aware of her presence in these waters. Sentinels have been posted on the Harbinger all night, and some of them must have seen her," answered the lieutenant. "I

shouldn't wonder if Lieutenant Knox had been prowling about the boat most of the night, for he doesn't leave anything to chance."

"His sentinel at the stern of the steamer allowed these niggers to take the launch, anyhow," said Drye with a smile.

"Seef managed that business very well, for he and Jake remained in the water till they were out of hearing. But the general expected the New Moon, and doubled the force of artillery on board when he received my note that she was coming," the lieutenant explained, seeing that for the present the Hipsy was in a safe position.

"But how could General Woodbine have expected her?" inquired the corporal, rather bewildered by the statement of the officer.

"Because I informed him in a note I sent to him in the evening."

"How did you know it?"

"Lieutenant Knox and I went into the cabin of the Harbinger to select our staterooms, and the steward who showed us about told me she was coming."

"That accounts for it," added Drye, who was

fully satisfied by this time. "But I wonder she does not come out and attack the New Moon; and I have no doubt she could make a full moon of her, or at least a fooled moon of her, for the Harbinger is very heavily armed, having six twelve-pounders on her main deck."

"The general knows what he is about, and I never worry about what he is going to do. We are about a hundred feet astern of the Moon now; and if we don't run against a fixed star, we shall soon be out of her reach," said Deck.

He had hardly uttered his hopeful words before a musket was discharged from the stern of the steamer, and the bullet whizzed through the air just above the skipper's head. This was not expected, though it was a wonder to him when he thought of it that the soldiers had not opened fire upon the launch from the forecastle; but he concluded that the enemy were in doubt as to the character of the boat until the officer had discovered their blue uniforms.

By this time the Hipsy had got so far down into the wide mouth of the creek that those on board of her could see the front of the town and

the Harbinger. But a second shot from the New Moon reminded Deck that they had no time to look about them; and the bullet struck the side of the cabin, and shattered a board in the casing, rousing Jake from his deep slumber.

“Gorra mighty!” yelled the contraband as he rushed out into the waist. “I done get killed!”

“No, you didn’t! Lie down!” shouted the lieutenant. “Keep behind the boiler, Seef! Lie down, Corporal! It’s no use to be shot for nothing. Those fellows shoot wildy, but a chance shot may knock one of us over.”

“Let me take the wheel, Lieutenant,” suggested Drye. “My life is not worth so much as yours.”

“It is worth as much to you as mine is to me,” replied Deck, as he dropped down on the floor of the standing-room, where he could not be seen from the steamer.

“I will stay behind the boiler with Seef,” added the corporal; and he joined the engineer at his post.

“I can’t see to steer in this position,” said

Deck from his humble posture. "You can see ahead, Corporal, where you are, and you must direct me."

"All right, Lieutenant."

The infantry on board of the New Moon continued to fire in single shots ; but the officers could not help seeing that the men were doing no execution. Deck had lain down flat on his back in the standing-room, with the back of his head against the after stanchion in which the wheel was set, reaching up with both arms to the spokes. In fact, he had nearly reversed the position he had occupied before. Possibly the enemy in the stern of the steamer could see the wheel ; but they could not see him, though his arms were exposed.

Over the stern of the launch the helmsman could see the two tall smoke-stacks of the New Moon, while the fire of the infantry still continued, and several balls had struck the cabin and sides of the boat.

"You are heading her down the river, Lieutenant," called the corporal.

"That's right," replied the skipper.

"Aren't you going over to the front of the town?"

"No; I am going up Marrow Creek, for the Moon cannot shine on us for any great distance up that stream," answered the lieutenant. "I made up my mind before we saw the steamer in the creek to land Seef and Jake near their home."

"All right, Lieutenant; you give orders, and I obey them," replied the corporal, though he looked as though he was disgusted with the course of his superior officer.

"Thank you, Mars'r, very much," said Seef, with a grateful smile on his face.

"Great Cæsar and Alexander the Great!" suddenly exclaimed Deck, as he looked over the stern of the launch, and saw the lofty smoke-stacks of the New Moon swinging out into the creek; and, hearing the splash of one of her paddle-wheels, he concluded that it was that on the port side, next to the bank, for the starboard one was not in motion. "The steamer is coming about; and that means that she is going to chase us!"

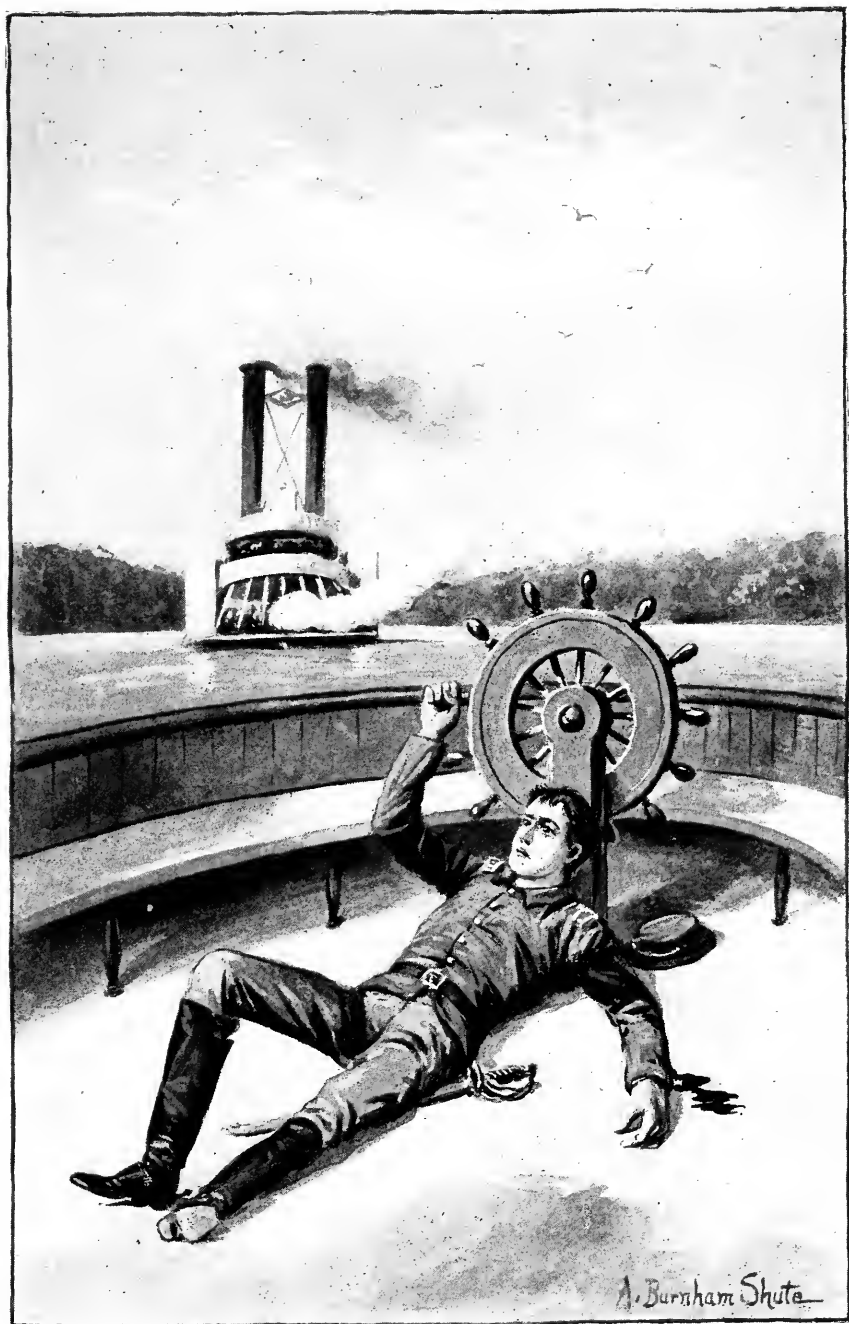
It also meant that she was bringing her two field-pieces into a position where they would cover the launch. Drye and Seef both turned their attention to the steamer, and fully realized what the helmsman had announced. Just then the lieutenant uttered a suppressed groan; for the men in the stern of the *New Moon* were still in position to use their muskets, and a bullet had struck the left arm of Deck between the elbow and the wrist. But he did not let go the wheel; though he had to use his right hand only, for the other was numb, and the strength had gone out of it.

"I am hit, Corporal; but stay where you are," said the helmsman, though the pain of the wound began to make itself felt.

"Let me take the wheel, Lieutenant Lyon."

"No; watch the enemy, for I cannot see her where I am. Can you see the *Harbinger*?" asked Deck.

"I can; and I have just made out that she has moved up to the landing-place, and the smoke is pouring in a big volume out of her smoke-stacks," answered Drye. "We are more than



“‘I am hit, Corporal; but stay where you are.’”

Page 152.



three hundred feet ahead of the enemy, and we shall soon get into the creek. Does your wound pain you, Lieutenant?"

"Somewhat; but I can stand it."

"The Harbinger is backing out from the levee, and I am sure now that she has got an idea of the situation!" shouted the corporal in a loud and excited tone.

In a few minutes more she had come about, and headed for the New Moon.

CHAPTER XII

CANNON-BALLS FLYING IN THE AIR

THE New Moon was now headed directly for the Hipsy, and as soon as she had come about, the soldiers on the forecastle resumed firing with their muskets; but she had taken some time in turning, for her port wheel appeared to work badly, and perhaps she had not water enough on the shelving bottom of the creek to permit it to work freely. This delay had enabled the launch to gain another hundred feet or so; and it was only occasionally that a bullet reached her, for doubtless the soldiers on board were armed with old flint-lock weapons.

The Harbinger had apparently expected to be attacked where she lay in the stream, if at all; for she had been very slow in getting up steam. She burned wood, and she could not bank her fires as steamers using coal did. She moved very leisurely when she had come about, though

her smoke-stacks poured out a heavy volume of smoke, indicating that her furnaces were well supplied with fuel, and the effect would very soon be apparent.

“I suppose our men have been watching the New Moon ever since she first appeared this morning,” said Corporal Drye from his position, which he had changed from the side to the front of the boiler; “but I wonder they did not get up steam early in the morning.”

“Captain Batterson is now the ranking-officer on board, but General Woodbine sent an order for Lieutenant Knox to retain the command of the steamer,” replied Deck, still in his awkward position on the floor of the standing-room.

With his wounded arm, it was very difficult for him to steer the boat, for he could use only his right arm. His white companion had been an engineer on a steamer on the Green River, and he had had plenty of experience on such vessels, though not in the pilot-house; but Deck Lyon had been obliged to learn how to handle the little wheel of the Hipsy after he took hold of it, for he had steered a boat only with a tiller.

He was something of a philosopher, and readily understood a machine of any kind when he was called upon to use it.

"Corporal, I think I must change places with you, for I find it very difficult to steer with one arm in this uncomfortable position," said Deck.

"All right, Lieutenant; I shall be glad to take your place," answered Drye.

"Don't show yourself; for they are still firing at us, and I hope you won't get hit," added Deck. "Lie down on the floor, and crawl over here."

The corporal did as he was directed, and with some difficulty they exchanged places without permitting the launch to fall off her course. Deck crawled to the boiler, and stood up in front of it. Seef looked at him with interest, and his expression indicated that he sympathized with him on account of the pain he was enduring.

"You look pale, Mars'r," said he.

"I think I have lost considerable blood," replied the sufferer; "and I suppose that would make me a bit chalky in the face, and I feel a little weak."

"Sit down on my stool, Mars'r," said the engineer, placing it behind the engine, which was still shaking and rattling under the pressure upon it.

"Thank you, Seef," answered Deck, as he seated himself near the machine, and looked about him to get a better idea of the situation than he had been able to obtain when on the floor under the wheel.

The Hipsy appeared to be absolutely gaining on her pursuer, but the smoke from her funnels proved that her firemen had stuffed the furnaces with wood.

"She can steam faster than the Hipsy," said the engineer; "and she will soon gain what she has lost again."

It was not a comforting remark from one who understood his machine, and it did not afford the lieutenant any consolation. He continued his study of the situation, and saw that the Harbinger was increasing her speed every moment. Beckland was at one of the engines, and he had no doubt some one among the cavalrymen or artillerists had been found to take Drye's place at the other. He obtained a good view of the

bow of the New Moon, and saw that they were placing the two field-pieces in position for use.

Deck felt rather shaky when he discovered these preparations, for a cannon-ball from a twelve-pounder might wreck the launch. His hope was that the enemy's artillerists were not skilful and experienced in the use of the pieces.

"Can't I do something for your wound, Mars'r Lyon?" asked Seef, who did not seem to be at all terrified by the prospect of a cannon-ball crashing through the sides of the Hipsy. "Let me make some lint, and tie your handkerchief around your arm."

"Thank you, Seef; I will in a few minutes," answered Deck, still looking, or "peeking" as little children say, around the boiler.

He had scarcely spoken before the boom of one of the field-pieces reverberated among the hills astern of the enemy's steamer.

"There you are!" exclaimed the corporal. "But we are not hit."

"No; not by a long chalk," replied Deck, revived and somewhat excited by the prospect of a little sharp work. "The ball did not come

within two rods of the launch, and was high enough to have gone over our smoke-stack. I doubt if they have any good gunners on board of the New Moon."

"So much the better," replied the corporal.

The shot was followed a minute later by another; but it was no better aimed than the first, for it passed a long way overhead, though its whizzing noise was distinctly heard. Jake, who had hid himself on the floor of the cabin, rushed out into the waist, screaming with terror.

"Gorra mighty!" he yelled. "We all git killed!"

"Hold your tongue, you fool!" said Seef.

But Jake was terrified out of his wits, and incapable of uttering an intelligible sentence beyond his wild exclamations.

"Get back into the cabin, and lie down on the floor, or you will get hit where you are!" shouted the engineer at him; and he retreated to his former lair, crawling under the transom on which the bed was made.

"There's another!" exclaimed the corporal; "but we are not hit yet."

“That gun did not come from the New Moon, but from the Harbinger; and it fell short of the mark, for the distance is nearly if not quite a mile. She is flying the American flag above her hurricane deck, and there is no doubt that she means business,” said Deck, speaking for the benefit of the helmsman, who could see nothing but the smoke-stacks of the enemy’s craft.

“If the Moon doesn’t fire any better than she has done so far, we are in no great danger,” added Drye.

“The Harbinger is getting her speed on, and she will soon do the Moon some damage,” said Deck.

“Can you see her plainly, Lieutenant?” asked the corporal.

“I can see her plainly enough, but I cannot make out what is going on upon her main deck where the guns are,” answered the lieutenant. “I will use my glass, and let you know.”

The helmsman appeared to be considerably excited, more so than his officer; though neither of them could help being stirred up by the triangular contest in the matter of speed, and espe-

cially at the prospect of the events of the next ten or fifteen minutes. The Harbinger was headed directly for the New Moon, which still kept on her course in pursuit of the Hipsy. Deck brought his field-glass to bear on the Harbinger; for he always carried it, as well as his sabre and revolver, suspended by a strap passing over his shoulder.

“I make out four of the twelve-pounders ranged across her forecastle, with the gunners standing by them,” reported the lieutenant. “Of course they are all loaded, and she will knock off the horns of the New Moon as soon as she gets a fair chance at her.”

“Good for the Harbinger!” exclaimed the corporal.

Another shot came from each of the guns of the enemy’s steamer; and this time the shot from one of them struck the top of the cabin, and scattered a shower of pine splinters inside and on the floor outside.

“Gorra mighty!” yelled Jake, rushing out into the waist again.

“Go back, you fool! You are not hit or

hurt!" shouted the engineer, who did not seem to be much disturbed by the flying woodwork.

"I'll be killed, Seef!" groaned the poor fellow, who had perhaps never heard the report of a cannon before, and certainly had never had one strike so near him.

The New Moon held her course for the mouth of Marrow Creek, while the Harbinger was keeping abreast of the Kentucky shore as near as it was prudent to go in the absence of a skilled pilot. In other words, the Union craft for the time being was approaching the enemy at an angle of about forty-five degrees, so that the fire of her guns would partially rake the decks of the Moon.

Seef had shovelled the coal into the furnace, and the Hipsy had not for a moment abated her best speed. The situation began to look very hopeful to the fugitives, for she was now within three hundred feet of the mouth of the creek. As soon as she entered it, a bend in the stream would afford them shelter from the shots of both infantry and artillery.

But the New Moon still kept on her course,

a circumstance which perplexed the corporal as he saw her funnels over the tafferel of the boat.

"I can't understand what the Moon is about," said he. "Why don't she come about, and get out of the way by running down the river? If you can see the four field-pieces on the fore-castle of the Harbinger, of course the enemy's officers can see them."

"I don't know what she is driving at, unless she means to run up Marrow Creek, and keep out of the way in that manner," suggested the lieutenant.

"That's it, Mars'r Lyon. The Harbinger draws two feet more water than the New Moon, and the Moon can go a mile farther up the creek than the other. There goes the Union guns, Mars'r!" exclaimed Seef.

One shot followed another till four had been sent into the enemy; and they hit her this time, every one of them, for Deck could see the wreck of the boards as they were shattered, and flew in every direction. But she evidently had a worse hit than those that merely splintered her

paddle-boxes; for she suddenly began to come about, and to whirl till she was headed in the direction from which she had just come. Deck explained the effect of the shots to the corporal.

"Which way did she come about, Lieutenant?" asked Drye.

"She turned to the right, to the starboard," replied Deck.

"Then her port engine was disabled."

"So I should say. But you need not crouch down under the wheel any longer, Corporal. The New Moon has set for the present, and she can't follow us any farther just now. She has stopped her starboard engine," said the lieutenant. "I think we are out of all danger now."

Seef blew off some of the steam that was crowding the boiler, as it was no longer necessary to hurry the launch, for the New Moon had found a foe worthy of all her attention. But the Confederate flag was still flying over her hurricane deck. She lay helpless on the current of the river, which was carrying her down stream; and she was likely to be hurled against the Kentucky shore at the bend of the stream behind

which the Harbinger had concealed herself the day before.

Seef had found a white rag in the cabin; and he was scraping lint while he observed the escaping steam, though he soon closed the safety-valve, and opened the furnace door. The corporal had resumed his perpendicular attitude, and was steering the launch as before, though he kept one eye fixed on the Harbinger and the foe all the time. The Hipsy entered the creek, and the engineer indicated a good landing-place not far from the mouth. He had scraped lint enough for his purpose by the time the boat came to the shore, and was made fast to a tree by Jake, who had come to his senses again.

The corporal examined the wound of the lieutenant as Seef removed the clothing. The ball had passed diagonally through the arm, just below the elbow, it was found; and the wound had bled profusely. Drye had some skill in surgery; and, with the sticking-plaster Deck always carried, he dressed the injury, bandaging it quite skillfully. The patient declared that the arm felt more comfortable as soon as it was bound up, and placed in a sling.

"Now, Seef, I suppose you know where you are, and you may huf it home from here," said Deck to the engineer.

"I hoped you would give me back the launch, Mars'r," added Seef with a winning smile.

"I would if I could; but I cannot return the Hipsy to your master, for he would use it, as he did before, against the Union forces. Good-by, Seef. You have behaved like a Union man," replied Deck, shaking hands with him, the corporal following his example, and granting that he had misjudged the engineer.

The two bondmen disappeared in the woods just as another volley of cannon-shot awoke the echoes in the hills. Drye went to the engine, Deck took the wheel, and the boat ran for the river.

CHAPTER XIII

THE STEAMER BATTLE ON THE RIVER

LIEUTENANT LYON found it more difficult to steer with one hand at the wheel than with two ; but compared with his position when lying on his back, it was vastly more agreeable. Besides, he was not wounded in the stomach, in which the vacuum reminded him that it was breakfast-time.

“Mars’r Lyon!” called Seef, emerging from the woods, and running with all his might to the creek.

“What’s the matter now?” demanded Deck, as the corporal stopped the engine at a word from the lieutenant.

“I left some of my clothes in a locker in the boat. Won’t you let me have them?” asked the engineer.

“Yes, Seef ; you can have anything that belongs to you, but nothing that belongs to the

launch," replied Deck. "Back her up to the shore, Corporal."

Drye ran the boat back till she was alongside the bank of the stream.

"Perhaps mars'r will let us have a bite to eat for breakfast before we go, for we have to walk seven miles before we can get anything at all. We had no time for a meal before," said Seef, as he leaped into the launch followed by Jake.

"We all want some breakfast; and you may get some for us, and have all you want yourselves," replied the lieutenant.

"Then, I will make some coffee, Mars'r," said Seef, as he told Jake to get out the furnace, and make a fire in it.

"While you are getting ready for breakfast, we will run down the creek, and see what the steamers are doing; but we will land you on the stream so that you can go home," added the lieutenant.

"Thank you, Mars'r; all right," replied the engineer. "Now, go ahead, Corporal."

"They don't seem to be firing now," said

Drye. "Those last shots were a broadside from the Harbinger, I suppose; for the New Moon could not fire more than two guns so near together. The enemy may be able to fix up the port engine of their boat; if they don't, the other will knock her all to pieces."

"Do you suppose they will be able to repair the damage to the engine?" asked Deck.

"Of course I don't know what damage has been done to it; but it may be only a slight injury, which the engineers can put to rights in a short time. If they can't mend the machine, she is in a bad fix," replied the corporal.

In a few minutes the Hipsy reached a point where they could see both steamers. The New Moon lay just as she was when her engineer stopped the starboard wheel; and the Harbinger had stopped her wheels at a distance of about three hundred feet, but was still making an occasional turn with them to avoid being carried any farther down the river by the current. Neither boat was firing her cannon or muskets at the other. Each of them was still floating its flag.

"They seem to be taking it easy just now,"

said Drye, after he had observed the belligerents for a few minutes. "I should think the Harbinger would pour the shot into her while she has such a good chance at her."

"I suppose Captain Batterson is in command now, at least of the artillery; and he understands his business well enough," answered Deck. "There goes the Moon again, and her soldiers have not gone to sleep yet."

This remark was called forth by a volley of musketry from the enemy; for the steamer had whirled about so far while the port wheel was not working, that the field-pieces could not be brought to bear upon the Harbinger. But the volley did not appear to have any effect upon her. Perhaps Captain Batterson had been waiting for the enemy to haul down the Confederate flag, which still waved defiance above the hurricane deck; for the volley from the muskets was immediately followed by the rapid discharge of the four pieces on the forecastle of the Union craft, as she had now become.

The shot crashed into the main deck, and appeared to have been aimed at the part of the

boat where the engines were located. What damage had been done to her beyond the tearing off of the pine boards about her port paddle-box could not be seen by the observers. But as the main deck was crowded with men, some of them must have been killed and wounded. The two broadsides, if the cannon volley was entitled to this designation, brought about a change in the disposition of the force on board of her; for with the aid of his glass Deck could see that the soldiers were hurrying to the saloon deck. Outside of the cabin on a Western steamer is a gallery; and from each stateroom a door leads out to this balcony, and another into the saloon.

"That's a wise move," the lieutenant remarked as soon as he comprehended it.

"What is, Lieutenant Lyon?" asked the corporal.

"All the infantry on the Moon has been sent to the saloon deck," replied Deck. "The soldiers are taking possession of the staterooms, where they cannot be readily seen, and they will open fire with their muskets upon the Harbinger very soon; though they might as well save their

powder and ball as waste them in their old flintlocks. They are opening all the gallery doors, and the men intend to stand in the staterooms and fire from the outer doors ; but I don't believe they can do much mischief at their present distance from our men."

"Breakfast is ready, Mars'r Lyon and Mars'r Corporal," called Seef from the cabin.

The launch had been made fast to a tree ; and both of them hastened forward to the meal, in order to be ready for the exciting events which were yet to come. Seef had ham and eggs for breakfast, and it was a very acceptable meal, with the excellent coffee ; and the two white men could not have satisfied their appetites any better at Delmonico's. They could hear the reports of the muskets fired by the enemy at will ; but they had the feeling that the Union men were not suffering much, if at all, from the fire ; and they finished their meal with hearty relish in spite of the musketry.

Both of them went to the standing-room, for the current of the creek had swung the boat around so that this was the most desirable part of

it to enable them to see the action. They had hardly seated themselves in the stern before another cannon-peal was heard, followed by three more; and the observers saw the gallery rail and the doors of the staterooms, as well as the sides of the cabin, flying in every direction. Captain Batterson had changed his tactics, and was now firing into the upper works of the New Moon, in order to meet the change the enemy had made in the stationing of their men.

But the Confederates were still "game;" for the musketry appeared to rattle from every part of the gallery, and the men had come out of the rooms, and stood in plain sight when they fired, taking advantage of the moment when the artilleryists were loading their pieces again. They did not remain long in this exposed position; and it was well for them that they did not, for another discharge of the four guns followed the last in a very short time.

"The Moon is swinging around, and they must have repaired the port engine!" exclaimed the corporal.

"In that case this affair will soon be over; and

it will be hot work, for the enemy are as full of pluck as gamecocks," added Deck, though he had never even seen one of the birds he mentioned.

The eyes of both were directed to the New Moon with the most intense interest; for it was evident to them that the action must soon culminate in the destruction of the enemy's vessel, though her two guns might disable one or both of the Harbinger's engines. Neither of the craft was suitable for fighting-boats, for their machinery was all exposed. Commodore Foote's steamers on the Mississippi, and up the Cumberland and Tennessee, were ironclads; and their machinery was protected, though some of them had their boilers and engines rent by shot at a later date.

As soon as she recovered the use of her port wheel, the New Moon advanced boldly into the teeth of the Harbinger, discharging her two field-pieces with considerable rapidity. But she was coming into close quarters under very great disadvantage, for the Union craft carried six guns to her four. But the military commander of the enemy appeared, as Deck interpreted the present

situation, to be satisfied that he had many more men than his foe, and intended to hurl them on the main deck of the Harbinger, or, nautically speaking, board her.

The lieutenant directed his glass at the Union boat, and saw that some kind of a movement was in progress there, though he could not make it out; but it soon developed itself. The forward deck of a Western steamer is not usually surrounded by a railing or any other obstruction. While the movement on this deck was in progress, the engines worked backward to counteract as far as possible the forward run of the enemy. Deck's glass enabled him to see that the six guns had been arranged in the form of a horseshoe, corresponding to the shape of the forecastle. Two guns nearest to the bow were abreast of each other, while the other four in the rear of them were so placed that there was space enough for them to fire directly ahead.

Deck explained the arrangement of the guns so that the corporal could understand it. At this moment Seef and his companion came out of the cabin, where they had not only eaten their

breakfast, but had washed the dishes, and put the apartment in good order.

"You may as well land here as in any other place," said the lieutenant.

"Just as mars'r says," replied the engineer. "I'm sorry I can't take the Hipsy back, but I'm much obliged to you, Mars'r Lyon, for your kindness."

The two contrabands went ashore; but as they were inclined to see the result of the fight on the river, they climbed a tree where they could obtain a good view of it, and Drye replenished the fire and started the boat. Deck kept the launch as near the Kentucky shore as it was prudent to go. The corporal put on all the steam he had, for the lieutenant wished to get as near the town as possible.

"The enemy will not take it into their heads to fire a cannon-shot at the Hipsy, will they?" asked the corporal.

"I think they have their hands full, for they have bigger game than we are; but they may, and we must take our chances," replied Deck, who was not any more disposed to run away

from the fire of the enemy than he was to unnecessarily expose himself to it.

The enemy continued the fire of musketry from the saloon deck, and was using artillery as rapidly as they could load and fire. The small arms appeared to fall short of the mark, for Deck could not see any men fall on the Harbinger's forecastle; but several shots from the field-pieces had torn away the forward part of the saloon.

"The Harbinger has stopped her wheels, and she is no longer backing up the stream," said Deck; and the launch had now reached a position where he could see without a glass. "Something will happen very soon now."

And something did happen before the words were fairly out of his mouth. One of the bow guns was discharged with a report which seemed to be twice as heavy as any which had preceded it, perhaps because the observer was much nearer than ever; and a shell went shrieking from its muzzle, and whizzing through the air with a curve that dropped it on the forecastle of the New Moon, where it exploded.

A moment later the other bow gun sent another, which fell upon the hurricane deck, knocking away one of her smoke-stacks, and tearing up the hurricane deck. The other four guns in quick succession sent as many shells into or upon the devoted steamer. A dense smoke was seen rising from the after part of the boat, indicating that she was on fire. By the time the six shells had been delivered, the forward guns were reloaded, and were immediately discharged.

The gun this time was loaded with solid shot, as though Captain Batterson wished to exhibit the variety of missiles he had in store for them. The shot struck the New Moon on her cutwater, or where it would have been if she had had one, and tore open the bow of the steamer. The Harbinger was completely enveloped in smoke, so that those on board of her could hardly, if at all, see the boat of the enemy. Deck had noticed that the explosion of the shell on the hurricane deck had not demolished the flag-staff on which floated the Confederate flag; but, being out of the smoke, he discovered a sergeant lowering the "stars and bars" from its lofty perch;

and his thought was that those who had fought under it had not dishonored the Southern symbol.

Turning the head of the Hipsy, he ran the boat up to the bow of the Harbinger, shouting with all his might that she had struck her flag.

CHAPTER XIV

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE NEW MOON

THE Harbinger had fired another gun, and sent a second solid shot into the hull of the New Moon before the little Hipsy could reach her. Deck could no longer see the enemy's steamer, and could not observe the effect of the shot; but the gunners had obtained the range of her hull, as indicated by the first of the same kind she had discharged.

The Union craft was at rest, the artillerists were all in their stations, and there was no noise on her deck, the silence enforced on board of a man-of-war being required by Captain Batterson. He was in the midst of his men, for the duty they were performing was somewhat different from that in which they had been drilled on the field.

The shout that the enemy had struck her flag, which Lieutenant Lyon uttered when he came

near enough to be heard, was noticed by some of the gunners, and reported to Captain Batterson, and the launch pointed out to him as it came alongside the steamer. He hastened to her, and he promptly recognized the officer at the wheel.

“Lieutenant Lyon!” he exclaimed; for in common with all on board the Harbinger, he had been wondering what had become of the little steamer with the lieutenant and the corporal on board of her.

“The New Moon has hauled down her colors, Captain Batterson,” repeated Deck.

“Are you sure of it, Lieutenant?” inquired the chief of the artillery.

“Very sure of it, sir; for I saw a man haul the flag down myself,” replied Deck. “I was over near the shore in this launch, where I could see the enemy very plainly. More than that, Captain, she appeared to be on fire at her stern.”

The smoke was blowing away from the New Moon, and in a few moments more she could be distinctly seen from the deck of the Union boat. Deck had observed the effect produced by the

first solid shot fired, when it tore open the bow of the enemy; and now he saw that the second one had ripped away her planking on the port side. The captain could see for himself that the colors had been hauled down; and he announced the fact in a loud voice to his men, whereat they gave three cheers.

Deck discovered Lieutenant Knox on the boiler deck, which was an open space forward of the saloon, through which the two funnels passed. If his men had not used their carbines from the stateroom gallery, they were in readiness to do so. Life heard the announcement that the enemy had struck her flag; and he hastened to the main deck, for he had been one of the first to observe the launch as she came alongside.

“God bless you, Deck!” he exclaimed, as he came within speaking distance. “I was afraid you were killed or a prisoner. And you have your left arm in a sling. Not a bad wound, I hope.”

“No, I think not; I am all right, Life.”

By this time the New Moon was not only on fire, but she appeared to be settling in the water,

as though the time was not far off when she would seek a resting-place at the bottom of the river. Captain Batterson gave the order to the engineers to go ahead, and the Harbinger started her wheels; for an engineer had evidently been found to take the place of Corporal Drye.

At this order, the engineer of the Hipsy backed away from the steamer; and coming about, Deck headed her down the river towards the crippled enemy. He kept the launch abreast of the Harbinger, which had been considerably battered by the shots from her foe, but her engines were still in good working order. If the lieutenant at the wheel had any doubts before in regard to the fire on board of the New Moon, he could now see that the flames were ascending in an angry volume from her stern.

One of the bursting shells had done this mischief to her, and he heard a waiter on board say afterwards that a number of straw beds had been placed on the deck to dry. All was confusion and dismay on the deck of the enemy; for the report that the steamer was on fire, and that her

bows had been stove in, had no doubt circulated among all hands.

"There is no more fighting to be done to-day," said Corporal Drye at the engine.

"Certainly not," replied Deck. "Our business now is to save the poor men on board of the New Moon from death by fire or water. We must forget that war is raging between the North and the South, and that the men on board the New Moon were enemies of ours half an hour ago."

"Those are my sentiments exactly!" exclaimed the corporal heartily. "We don't war on men who are drowning or burning up, and I trust our people will save them all."

"Amen!" added the lieutenant. "Hurry her up as much as you can, Corporal."

"I have just put more coal in the furnace, and I think she is making as good speed as she has any time to-day," replied the engineer. "There is a flatboat pulling towards us, and she looks as though she had just come out of Marrow Creek."

But he did not do anything more than glance

at it, for he was busy observing the progress of the flames on the doomed steamer. The wind was blowing tolerably fresh from the westward, or down the river at this stretch of it; and that was in favor of the Moon, though the fire was working forward against it. The blaze was now issuing from the side of the after part of the saloon, and the hurricane deck nearly as far forward as the smoke-stacks was falling in as the deck beams were burned off.

Of course the blazing timbers set fire to the floor of the saloon; and the woodwork in the intense heat burned like tinder, and there was no such thing as checking the conflagration. The engines, or one of them, had again been disabled, so that the officers could not run her ashore. The Harbinger was making all the speed she could, and the negro firemen were assisted by the soldiers in throwing fuel into the furnaces.

"They are jumping overboard at the stern!" exclaimed the corporal. "It must be terribly warm in that part of the boat, and I don't blame the poor fellows for taking to the river. But I hope they can swim."

"Some of them have boards, boxes, or something else to support them in the water," added Deck, whose kindly feelings were as deeply moved as though the sufferers had fought on his own side.

"That flatboat has begun to pick them up," said the corporal. "I am afraid they will swamp her as they crowd into her."

"We are abreast of the Moon's bow now, and we shall soon get at them," replied Deck. "There are not many of them in the water."

"Not more than twenty, I should say," added Drye. "Of course the most of the men hastened to the bow of the steamer when they saw how fast the flames were travelling."

On board of the Harbinger the six field-pieces had been moved into a compact mass, and most of the artillerists had been sent to the saloon to make room for the imperilled Confederates. Deck saw that Lieutenant Knox was again in command, and had sent part of his men to the forecastle. Sergeant Sluder was at the wheel, assisted by Corporal Milton. The wheels of the boat had been stopped, and the lieutenant was giving orders to the engineers which soon brought the

forward part of the boat alongside that of the burning craft.

The fasts of the Harbinger were thrown on the deck of the other boat, and the men secured them. The military commander of the force on the deck was tall enough to have been a Kentuckian, though he was not; but he was a fine-looking man. He stood near the plank-sheer; and as the space was ample, he formed his men by fours, and marched them on board of the Harbinger in as good order as though they had been on parade. The company appeared to be vastly better drilled than many the Unionists had seen.

Lieutenant Knox received them as they came on the deck, and directed the officer who was leading them to proceed to the after part of the deck. There was not room enough for all of them there; and half of them were marched up the flight of steps to the boiler deck, and into the saloon.

The tall captain was the last to leave the deck of the New Moon; and as he came on board, Lieutenant Knox saluted him with more than his usual deference, and the Confederate captain re-

turned it with quite as much respect and a good deal more grace.

“Lieutenant Knox, of the Riverlawn Cavalry, in command of this boat,” said Life, still holding the hand of his late enemy.

“Captain Singer, of the Twenty-Eighth Tennessee Infantry,” added the officer.

“I am really sorry to meet you, Captain, under such unfortunate circumstances for you; but you have fought bravely, and done all that man could do, and I respect you for it,” replied Lieutenant Knox, in the best English he could command.

“Thank you, Lieutenant; and since the battle has gone against the Confederates, and we have fallen into the hands of the Federalists, I am glad that my men are in the power of a considerate and generous enemy,” replied Captain Singer. “Now, Lieutenant Knox, will you allow me to have my dead and wounded brought on board of your steamer?”

“Certainly, Captain; and my men shall assist you in moving them,” answered Life, who had a kind heart in his rough exterior, and had taken some lessons, both by precept and example, in

humanity to a fallen enemy, from Deck and from Major Lyon.

The captain ordered his men to attend to this duty, and every cavalryman on board was ordered to assist in the work. There were ten men killed, and over twenty wounded. The latter were borne to the saloon, and placed in the berths of the staterooms. The dead were laid out at the stern, and covered with sailcloth. As soon as it was certain that no one had been left on board, the Harbinger backed away.

The Hipsy proceeded on her way to the relief of those in the water, with Deck still at the wheel. The flatboat, with as many of the soldiers in it as it could carry, came to the launch as soon as she arrived at the locality; and Deck and Drye found that it was in charge of Seef and Jake. They had found the boat near where they had landed, and came off to see the conclusion of the battle, which was a sight that no one had ever seen on the river before.

But there was no time for talk; and the saved were taken into the launch, and both craft proceeded to rescue the remainder of the sufferers,

only a few of whom could swim, and were in danger of drowning in spite of their frail supports. The corporal shut off the steam from the cylinder, stopping the screw, and opened the safety-valve, permitting the launch to drift with the current. Some of those who had been saved took a pair of oars they found slung under the rail, and a boathook, and extended them to those still in the water.

The corporal labored like a Trojan in hauling in the soldiers and others who had escaped from the burning vessel. The flatboat picked up those who did not come within reach of the launch, and in a very short time all of those who had been in peril were safe on board of the Hipsy. One of them wore the uniform of an officer, and seated himself on the divan near the wheel.

"This has been a bad day for us," said he.

"You have fought bravely, defended your boat like men, and you have nothing to regret but the loss of the fight; for you come out of it with honor," replied Deck.

"Thank you, Lieutenant, for your kind words,"

replied the officer. "You appear to be a staff-officer."

"I am on the staff of General Woodbine."

"I am Lieutenant Hewson of the Twenty-Eighth Tennessee."

"I am glad to know you, Lieutenant, and I sympathize with you in your misfortune; but of course I rejoice in the victory we have won, though I was not engaged."

Some more pleasant words passed between Deck and Seef, and the Hipsy proceeded towards the town, the skiff pulling for the creek. The Harbinger ran her bow on the shore, ready to land the prisoners. The whole of the Union force left in the town was drawn up on the beach, the three companies of cavalry mounted, and General Woodbine, with his remaining staff-officer, on the right of the line.

Lieutenant Lyon steered the launch to the point nearest to the commander, and ran her bow on the shore. Leaving the corporal to land the saved when the order to that effect should be given, he went on shore, and hastened to the head of the line. Knox saw that the general was on

the shore ; and he permitted no one to land, for both he and Captain Batterson agreed that they should wait for orders before anything was done.

Deck saluted General Woodbine, who returned the courtesy, and then extended his hand to him.

CHAPTER XV

AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE GENERAL

"I HAVE been very much concerned about you, Lieutenant Lyon," said General Woodbine, as he grasped the hand of the young officer. "It was reported to me at the camp this morning that the steam-launch in which you slept last night, with Corporal Drye, had disappeared during the night. The boat was nowhere to be seen when her absence was discovered. I was afraid you had been killed or made a prisoner."

"I suppose you will believe me, General, if I tell you that I have not been killed, and I assure you that I have not been made a prisoner at any time," replied Deck.

"The evidence that you were not killed is excellent, and I am willing to accept your statement that you were not a prisoner; but you are wounded," added the commander.

"I have a flesh-wound in the arm, and I shall

have it dressed by Dr. Farnwright as soon as he has attended to the wounded on board of the Harbinger," replied Deck.

"But where have you been? What possessed you to sleep on board of the steam-yacht?"

"I thought the craft would be very useful while we remained here; and I was afraid it would be taken by the servants of Mr. Thornfield, for they came down in her to convey him home," the lieutenant explained. "She was made fast at the stern of the Harbinger, with sentinels on the deck; and it never occurred to me that it was not as prudent to sleep in the cabin of the Hipsy as in the saloon of the large steamer."

"Hipsy?" repeated the general with a smile.

"The name painted on the stern and bow of the boat is Hephzibah, which comes from the Bible; but Seef called her the Hipsy, as people in the country in New Hampshire generally do, and Corporal Drye and I did the same."

"And who is Seef?"

"He was the engineer of the craft, and though

a slave, he is whiter than many white men. Drye waked me in the morning by telling me that the Hipsy was underway. We took possession of the launch, and also the two men who had swum out to her, cut her fast, and stayed in the water till she had drifted some distance in the darkness, and who did not know there was anybody on board of her. I think we saved the boat by sleeping on board of her. I was afraid the two men would steal her again, and I decided to land them on the other side of the river; but the appearance of the New Moon drove us into a creek over there."

"Did the moon alarm you?"

"The moon in the sky did not, for she was not in sight; but the steamer New Moon did, for that is the name of the boat that was burned, with which the Harbinger had her fight."

"I must hear the rest of the story another time, for here is Lieutenant Knox," interposed the commander.

Life approached the general, and saluted him. He was on foot, for all the horses had been

sent back to the camp. He reported all that had occurred on board of the Harbinger since he had anchored her in the stream off the shore, according to his orders. The absence of the Hipsy had not been noticed till sunrise; for the sentinels had reported the appearance of a steamer on the other side of the river at daylight, and she had occupied the attention of all on deck.

He reported that three had been killed and nine wounded in the action on the river, and that all the soldiers remaining on board of the New Moon had been saved. The steamer had burned to the water's edge, and had floated down the river with the current. The battle had been fought mainly by Captain Batterson's artillery.

"It seems to have been a fortunate event that I sent the whole of his company on board before you hauled the Harbinger out into the stream," suggested the commander.

"It was indeed very fortunate, General Woodbine," replied Life. "Captain Batterson handled his guns very efficiently, and he was in the midst of his company all the time. He fought the battle, and he deserves all the credit of it; for

on our side most of the fighting was done by the artillery, and our six guns against the two of the enemy carried the day in our favor. I wait for further orders, General Woodbine."

He was directed to send the wounded to the hospital; and Lieutenant Herndon was ordered to carry an order to Major Lyon, requiring him to have the rest of Lieutenant Knox's platoon sent to the steamer to assist in bearing the wounded to the hospital.

"I am glad to see you again, Deck," said Herndon, as he grasped the hand of the absentee; "but I am sorry to see that you are wounded;" and he rode off to execute his order.

The wounded of both sides were conveyed on the sacking and beds from the berths of the steamer by the uninjured prisoners and the men of Life's platoon. Dr. Farnwright, who had been sent on board the night before, had attended to the Union sufferers, and was ministering to those of the other side when the order for their removal came. The surgeon superintended this work; and on his way to the square he passed the general, and saw Deck, with his arm in a sling, at his side.

“How is this, Lieutenant Lyon? You have been wounded, and you have not been near me yet,” said the doctor, as he saluted the commander.

“I thought you had enough to do in looking out for those who needed you more than I did,” replied Deck.

“Always considerate,” added the commander. “This morning while you were all away, I took possession of Sexton’s house, and had him sent to the hospital. I have established my headquarters there ; and when you are ready to attend to Lieutenant Lyon, you will find him there.”

“I am ready now, and I will go with him there,” replied the doctor.

The horses of those who were on board of the steamer had been brought from the camp, and those of Deck and the surgeon were brought to them. They mounted, and, attended by four cavalrymen, rode to the house. Two mounted men were on duty before it as sentinels. They entered, and found that the general had taken the parlor for his office, and a room up-stairs for his chamber. Finch, his colored servant, was

in possession, and two mulatto women were called from the kitchen in the rear. The man directed them to prepare the room in the rear where Sexton had suffered so terribly with rheumatism, for the use of the wounded staff-officer.

But the doctor could not wait for the room to be made ready, and he attended to Deck's wound in the office. He found that the bullet of the soldier who had hit him had passed diagonally through the fleshy part of the arm, just below the elbow. He made it out to be much worse than Deck had supposed it was, for it had stirred up the nest of muscles and sinews there. It was not a dangerous wound, but it was likely to affect the use of the arm for a long time if not well cared for.

Dr. Farnwright dressed the wound, and then put a splint on the opposite side of the member to prevent the patient from twisting his arm, and then ordered him to keep quiet. Before he had finished his task, his father and his brother Artie rode up to the house, and were admitted, the general having informed them that the lieutenant had been wounded.

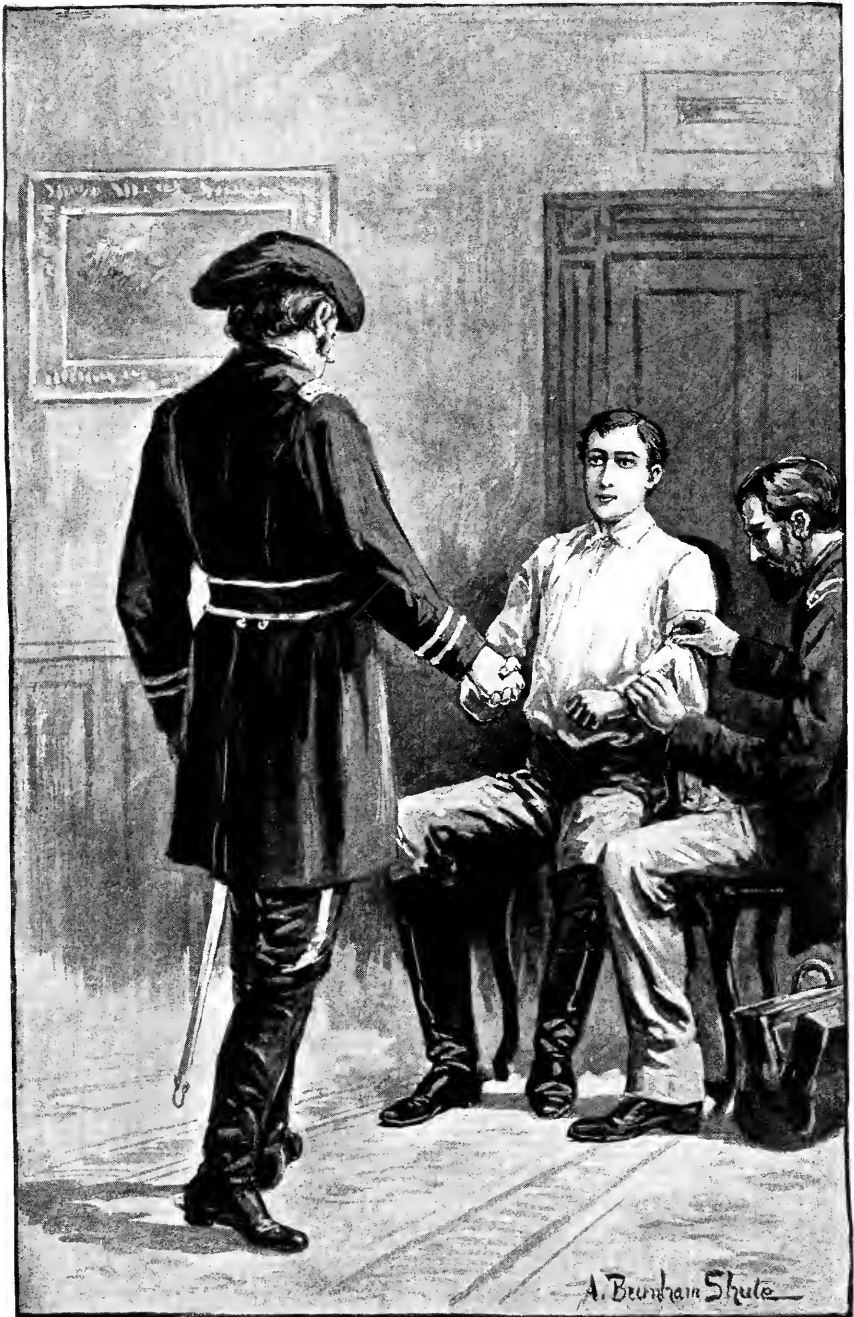
“Good-morning, my son,” said Major Lyon, when the surgeon had saluted him. “You have been unfortunate, Dexter,” for he never abbreviated his name, as everybody else did.

“On the contrary, father, I think I have been very fortunate; for I have returned without a bullet through my head or heart, and I have brought back the steam-launch,” replied Deck, taking the offered hand, and speaking very cheerfully, though he was still suffering considerable pain from his wound.

“Sorry to see you with your arm in a sling, Deck,” said Artie, taking the patient’s right hand when his father released it. “I ought to have been with you when you went off boating.”

“If you had, perhaps you would have come back worse off than I am, if you had come at all,” added Deck.

The surgeon hastened out of the house, mounted his horse, and rode to the square where the hospital was located. The wounded had all been removed, and the prisoners had all been marched up to the buildings which the town council had set apart for a hospital. There were over



“‘Good-morning, my son,’ said Major Lyon.”

Page 200.

two hundred prisoners of war confined in these buildings. Though the town was hardly more than ten miles from the Tennessee line, it was a strong Union locality; but there was a considerable number of Secessionists in the village and its vicinity.

The surgeon had explained the nature of Deck's wound to his father, and insisted that he should not use the arm, and the quieter he kept, the better it would be for him. The doctor had hardly departed before General Woodbine and his remaining aid came to the house. The cavalry, except such guards as were required in the town, had been sent back to the camp. There was nothing to do but wait for orders from General Thomas, who had established his headquarters at Somerset. The orders which had brought General Woodbine's force as far as it had advanced to the westward had been countermanded, and he was ordered to wait for further orders where he was.

"Well, how do you feel, Lieutenant?" asked the commander as he entered the room.

"Quite comfortable, General; though the doc-

tor makes out my wound to be rather worse than I supposed it was," replied Deck.

"We are likely to have a quiet time for some days, if not weeks; and we may all take a rest, unless more steamers should be sent up the Cumberland to forage the country for supplies, or the guerillas break loose in this part of the State," said the general, as he seated himself at his desk. "But I want to hear the rest of your story, Lieutenant. You told me you were driven into a creek to avoid the New Moon."

"I could not find any landing where I could put Seef and Jake on shore," replied Deck, informing his father and brother who these persons were. "It was Seef who told me where this creek was;" and the lieutenant gave all the details of his visit up the stream.

He stated in what manner Corporal Drye had given him wrong information, because the Confederate steamer was concealed in the curve of the river. Seef had behaved so well that he had decided to take him and his companion over to Marrow Creek, and land them there. As the Hipsy came to the mouth of the Tennessee Creek, she

had encountered the New Moon entering the stream for the evident purpose of concealing her presence from the people of the town.

“What do you mean by the New Moon, Dexter?” asked Major Lyon, perplexed by the name. “Excuse me for interrupting the narrative, General.”

“You are very excusable, for the name bothered me when your son mentioned it. The New Moon was the name of the steamer that was burned,” replied the commander.

Deck continued his story. He had attempted to escape in the Hipsy by running by the steamer; but after some delay, which had afforded him a good turn, she came about and pursued the launch. She opened with musketry upon the little steamer, and followed it later with her field-pieces, one shot from which had nearly wrecked the cabin of his boat.

He then described the position he had been obliged to take on his back in steering the boat, and stated that he had been wounded while reaching up in holding the spokes of the wheel. He had landed the colored men in the

creek, and came out where he could see the fight, for he heard the noise of the artillery before.

“You saw the fight from the levee, and it is not necessary for me to go over that; but I heartily commend Corporal Drye for his coolness in danger, for his skill as an engineer, and for his readiness and zeal in the discharge of his duty,” continued Deck, concluding his narrative, though he was called upon to answer a great many questions.

“Have you been to breakfast, Lieutenant?” asked the commander, as though he had just thought of it.

“I have, sir. We took the meal up Marrow Creek; and it was cooked by Seef, who is a good cook, as well as engineer, pilot, and jack-at-all-trades,” replied Deck.

“Finch says your room is ready; and I think you had better take a nap before dinner-time, for you got up very early this morning,” said General Woodbine, as he arranged some paper on his desk, and took his pen in hand as though he intended to write.

The lieutenant's father and brother went with him to see his room ; and he concluded to take the commander's advice, for he felt sleepy and tired after the excitement and fatigue of the morning.

CHAPTER XVI

REVIEW OF THE SITUATION IN KENTUCKY

AFTER the battle of Mill Springs, Jan. 19, 1862, a short season of inactivity followed in Kentucky; though there were skirmishes, guerrilla raids, and acts of violence, on the part of angry and overheated partisans. But the State had cast in her lot with the Federal government. The Confederate forces had attempted to make the Ohio River their principal line of defence in this part the country, but had failed.

No decided demonstration had been made against Louisville, which the enemy desired to possess, not only as a strategetic point, but for the moral effect of holding the principal city of the State. What we have called the Home Guards organizations, designating them as Union or Confederate, received different names; and the State Guards, though growing out of their position in the neutral period, had been more prop-

erly called the Secession Guards, for almost generally they joined the armies of the South.

In September, 1861, the military authorities of the State obtained power to require all arms in the hands of associations suspected of disloyalty to the Union, and still remaining in the State, to be surrendered. This was a plan for the destruction of the State Guards, and to remove the influence which had so far been active in drawing the people into the ranks of the enemy. The legislature had appropriated one million dollars for the purpose of raising and arming loyal troops, and the military board was empowered to use the credit of the State to the extent of two millions more for the same object.

In September the State also called from the people forty-two thousand troops, or about one-half of those remaining within her territory who were of the military age and able-bodied. The legislature required the public offices to be moved out of the reach of the enemy whenever the State was invaded by the Southern army, and prohibited the sale of liquor within five miles of any military camp.

Governor Magoffin, if not an active Secessionist, was in full sympathy with the desire to carry the State out of the Union; but the people as a rule had a profound respect for the Constitution and the laws, and were disposed to proceed legally, even when self-protection rendered it necessary to disregard the forms, and even the substance, of the law. While foes from without and foes within the State were trampling on the statutes, it was an extremely difficult matter to keep within legal bounds; the better class of people, the ruling influences of the Commonwealth, were still in favor of order.

The legislature passed many bills for the protection of the State, and the governor vetoed them as fast as they came to him. But the executive was still treated with all the formal respect his office demanded. The measures were passed over his veto. He had the right to nullify any bill adopted in this manner, and it was very singular that he was permitted to do so without insult or interference with his prerogative. But no effort to impeach him, or drive him from his office in any manner, was made. He was

closely watched by the loyal men that surrounded him, but he appeared to be guilty of no overt act of disloyalty.

Governor Magoffin was no doubt an honest and conscientious man, and entirely sincere in his belief that the best interests of the State required that it should become a part of the Southern Confederacy. Though he was confronted by a vast majority of the representatives of the people who passed their measures for the security of Kentucky over his vetoes, yet it is an evidence of his honesty that, as the executive of the State, he enforced the laws that were legally enacted in spite of him.

It was a wonderful manifestation of respect for law, that this curious relation between the governor and the legislature that existed for a year and a half without any attempt of the latter to remove the former from his office, because the law was so highly respected on both sides. The executive retained his office till his tardy conviction of his anomalous position induced him to resign.

The representatives of the people were also honest, and acted upon their convictions of duty.

To strengthen the hands of the Federal commanders in the State, the legislature passed a bill requiring information, surveys, maps, and drawings, to be handed over to these officers. The governor promptly vetoed this measure, giving as his reason that private property could not be taken without due process of law. His reasoning was convincing to the members, and they receded from their former expression, and there was only a single vote in favor of passing the bill over the veto; and this was the only veto of the governor that was sustained by the legislature.

The regular troops of the State were rapidly enlisted and organized, and the discipline and drill of the forces were greatly improved. The Home Guards, now that the State Guards had been eliminated by their retirement into the Confederate armies, were difficult to control. They were detached local bodies, and were not as conscientious as the governor and legislature, and had not the same respect for law; for they raided, robbed, and even murdered in some cases, those who sympathized with the South, though the latter were peaceable citizens.

“The local disturbances these bodies bred were of more permanent damage to the State than all the large operations of war that were ever carried on within her borders.”¹ The first and most important lesson the young people of our country should learn is an earnest and sincere respect for law; and the “Majesty of the Law” should be bowed down to, and held in the highest regard, even when the citizen believes himself individually subjected to injustice.

Before the end of September twenty-thousand Kentuckians were enlisted, and the troops from the Northern States carried the Federal force in the State up to forty-thousand men. The Confederates were alive to the importance to their cause of the possession of the State, and they were trying to obtain footholds before the government could mass troops enough in the State to resist their advance. The greater portion of Kentucky south of the Green River was held by the enemy, who were pushing out forces towards the more central sections.

In October General Zollicoffer, with seven

¹ Shaler : “History of Kentucky.”

thousand troops, pushed forward towards the central part of the State with the same object in view. In Laurel County he was confronted by the regiment under command of Colonel Garrard, and was held in check till General Schoepff, with six regiments of Ohio, Indiana, and Tennessee troops, and Wolford's cavalry, arrived, and the enemy retired with the loss of thirty killed and about one hundred wounded, while the Federal force had only four killed and twenty-one wounded; but the latter held a strong defensive position.

While the State was the theatre of what Shaler calls "endless skirmishes and cross-roads battles," such as those in which the Riverlawn cavalry were frequently engaged, the Secessionists held a convention, the members of which appointed themselves, or were elected by Kentucky regiments in the Confederate army. An ordinance of Secession was passed, and State officers elected.

The object of this movement was to give the Secession element an apparent show of authority, believing it would stimulate the disloyal in the State, and induce them to make a demonstration

in favor of the Confederacy. Another object was to persuade the Kentucky regiments in the South that they were actually acting with the State government, and fighting for their beloved Commonwealth. But this bogus government soon went over the line into the South, and remained there, waiting two years for the time to come when they could take possession of the government within the borders of the State. It never came.

The Confederates had hoped to make the Ohio River their line of defence, and of operations against the loyal States on the other side of it. Failing to accomplish this purpose, they adopted another line, including Columbus on the Mississippi, Bowling Green on the Big Barren, a branch of Green River, and Mill Springs on the Cumberland. The movements of the Union army were then directed against this line. Mill Springs had been lost to the enemy by the battle which takes one of its names from this place, but is more properly called the battle of Logan's Cross Roads.

For nearly three weeks after the battle of Mill Springs, the work of organizing and drilling the Federal troops proceeded in Kentucky. About

the first of February a movement against the western portion of the Confederate line of defence began at Cairo under the direction of General Grant, with Commodore Foote's squadron of Western gunboats. General Buell was engaged in organizing the Army of the Ohio. General Thomas was still at Somerset. General Woodbine had moved his force along the Cumberland with the belief that he would be ordered to advance from Barkville to support General Mitchell; but the order had been countermanded.

This was the situation when the steamer fight occurred on the Cumberland in which Deck Lyon was wounded in the arm. He showed his father and brother the room in the house where General Woodbine had established his headquarters, and they realized with satisfaction that he was in a comfortable apartment. He looked quite pale, for he had lost considerable blood before the wound had been dressed by his companions in the Hipsy. As soon as they had gone, he went to bed in proper form, and did not wake till Finch called him to dinner at one o'clock.

He dressed himself, and felt better than in the

morning, and received a hearty greeting from the commander and Lieutenant Herndon. For some reason the General was not in a talking mood, and seemed to be engaged in deep thought. As soon as the meal was over, he sent Herndon with an order to the camp, and then went to work at his desk. Several sheets he had covered with writing lay at his side; and it was evident that he was writing a report, doubtless of the capture of the Harbinger and the destruction of the New Moon.

Deck did not wish to disturb him, and he went to his own room. He found his valise had been brought from the tent at the camp; and he occupied himself in writing a letter to his mother, not very confident when it could be sent, for the mails were irregular. Then he mended some of his clothes that needed repairing, and thus used up most of the afternoon. Then there was a knock at his door, and Finch came in at his call to enter.

“General Woodbine wishes to see you, Lieutenant;” and he promptly obeyed the summons.

“How much water does the Hipsy draw,

Lieutenant Lyon?" asked the commander as he entered the office.

"About two feet, General," replied Deck.

"Not more than that?"

"That is what Seef gave me as her draught, and I have no doubt from my own experience on board of her that the statement was correct."

"What is her present condition? for I believe you said she had been hit by a cannon-shot from the New Moon," inquired the commander, who evidently desired to make use of her for some purpose.

"She was hit more than once, and her cabin in the forward part of the launch was considerably smashed; but she is otherwise in good condition, and Corporal Drye told me the engine was in first-rate order," answered Deck.

"Did Dr. Farnwright order you to stay in the house?"

"No, sir; on the contrary, he directed me to stay out-doors as much as I could, but to take no violent exercise," said Deck.

"Can you ride your horse?"

"The doctor told me I might ride horseback

every day, but I must walk my horse so that the jar might not injure my arm."

The general called Finch, and sent him to order the lieutenant's horse.

"You appear to know more about boats than most of our men; and I want you to go to the chairman of the town council, and ask him to send a force of carpenters to the Hipsy to repair the cabin, and do whatever you think she may need. The work must be done to-night. Wait a few minutes till your horse comes. I have written my report of recent events, and I have other matter of greater importance to submit to General Thomas. It seems to me the easiest and safest way to send the documents is by the river, in the Hipsy, and I shall employ Lieutenant Herndon as the messenger. I desire to have you see that the boat is properly coaled, provisioned, and fitted out for the trip this afternoon."

"I beg your pardon, General, but why do you select Lieutenant Herndon?"

"Because you are wounded," replied the commander with a laugh. "I should much prefer

to have you go, because you are somewhat acquainted with the locality of Somerset."

"My wound does not disable me for such duty," protested Deck.

"Go to the hospital, and ask the doctor what he has to say about it, while you are out; and if he does not object, you shall be the messenger."

Deck mounted Ceph after the steed had greeted his master, and departed on his mission.

CHAPTER XVII

AN EXPEDITION UP THE CUMBERLAND

CEPH received his master with a long and delighted neigh, and Deck patted his neck and rubbed his nose ; but it was not an easy thing for him to mount his steed without disturbing his arm. A horse-block was not an uncommon thing in the South any more than it was in New England, and one of the sentinels led the steed to one at the corner. In cavalry tactics every movement in mounting is given, and it is practised till the trooper is thoroughly proficient.

One point is to grasp a tuft of the animal's mane with the left hand, and this was the part which Deck did not dare to undertake after the instructions of the doctor. He was permitted to ride horseback, but he was advised to mount on the right-hand side of the steed. He was not left-handed ; and mounting on the wrong side was too awkward and heretical for him, and he pre-

ferred the horse-block. His left arm in a sling excused him for resorting to this method in the eyes of the reasonable critic, and he was very soon in his seat on the saddle.

The sentinel wanted to hold the horse; but Ceph made a row immediately when the trooper took him by the bit, for he did not easily permit it when his master was present, and he would stand still all day when he understood that his master wished him to do so. He appeared to comprehend that his rider was wounded, for he took a long snuff at the injured member. He started at a walk, as though he thought this was the proper thing to do under the circumstances, though he usually went off at a gallop; but this depended upon the word or the signal given him.

The lieutenant proceeded to the square, where he found the town council in session; and the messenger at the door announced his desire to see the chairman. As an officer on the staff of the general, he was received with proper respect; and four carpenters soon appeared at the door, armed with their tools. The chairman hoped the lieu-

tenant was not badly wounded, to which Deck replied in his usual gentlemanly manner.

The mechanics were directed to follow the officer to the levee, where the Hipsy was made fast to the Harbinger ; and Life Knox was still in charge of her, with twenty men of his platoon. Sentinels were stationed in different parts of the vessel. Sergeant Sluder had become the pilot, though he knew little about the river, and had been instructed to keep a sharp lookout on the bend of the river for any other steamer that might wish to have a bout with Captain Batterson's artillery.

The four guns of his company had been taken to the camp and parked there ; but the two that came up the river on the Harbinger still remained on her deck. Life wanted to know what Deck was doing, after he had inquired about his arm ; but he could only tell him that he was ordered to have the steam-launch repaired, for he did not feel at liberty to say anything about the mission on which she was to be sent.

He had pointed out to the chief carpenter what was to be done to the Hipsy, and the men were

engaged in removing the wreck made by the cannon-shot. The lumber for the work had been ordered on the way down, and it came immediately. A bench was set up on the forecastle of the Harbinger. Deck had not dismounted; and as soon as the men were at work he went to a coal-yard, and ordered the fuel for the furnace and a quantity of charcoal for cooking purposes.

The orders for provisions and stores were placed. Deck stood by to see that the carpenters did their work properly. The beds in the cabin of the Hipsy were not first-class, and the lieutenant ordered four berth-sacks and the bedding for as many berths to be put on board from the Harbinger. He had two of them placed in the bow, where there was room enough for them. The carpenters had finished their work by sundown; and then the coal, provisions, and supplies were stowed away by troopers under the direction of Deck.

The young officer thought he had done his work, and done it well; for the Hipsy was ready for her trip up the river. He started to walk his horse back to headquarters, but he had gone but

a short distance before he met Seef coming down from the square. He could not help wondering what he was doing in the town among so many soldiers; for he had taken his master down the river when Thornfield gave his information for the benefit of the plundering steamers, for which he was now confined in the county jail.

“Good-evening, Mars’r Lieutenant Lyon!” exclaimed Seef, though he did not presume to offer his hand to the officer.

“Good-evening, Seef; I am glad to see you,” replied Deck, offering his hand to the contraband; for the man’s honesty and fidelity under difficult circumstances had won his regard. “But what are you doing in the town at this time of day?”

“Missus sent me over to inquire about Mars’r Thornfield; and I tried to see him, but the guards would not let me go in,” answered Seef. “I hope you will let me go into the jail.”

“I cannot let you go in; no one but General Woodbine can give you a permit to see your master,” added Deck. “I was going up to the hospital to see the doctor; but if you will come

with me to headquarters, I will see what can be done for you."

"Thank you, Mars'r Lieutenant; you have been very kind to me, and I will go with you," replied Seef; and he followed the horse of the officer.

They found the general walking in front of the house, taking his exercise after his long confinement in his office. Deck stated the errand of his companion in the town, and asked if Seef could be admitted to the jail to see his master.

"Have you any message for Thornfield?" asked the commander, turning to the servant.

"No message, Mars'r General, except to tell him that the family are all well, and missus wants to know if he is well and comfortable."

"Are you sure that is all?" demanded the general sternly.

"Very sure, Mars'r; that is all I have to say to him."

"I will allow you to see him, but not alone. Wait a minute, Lieutenant," said the commander as he entered the house.

Presently he returned with a paper in his hand, which he gave to Deck.

“You will go in with him, Lieutenant, and you will not lose sight of them for a moment while they are together,” added the commander; and Deck rode off attended by Seef.

The permit obtained for them ready permission to see the prisoner; and as a staff-officer the lieutenant might have obtained admission for the messenger, but he was very careful not to transcend his powers. The Secessionist was very glad to see his servant, who entered first; but he did not look pleased when Deck entered the cell. Seef delivered his message from the prisoner’s wife, and said nothing more than he had stated to the commander.

“What has become of the launch, Seef?” asked Thornfield.

“We have taken possession of her,” interposed Deck.

“She is my private property,” added the prisoner indignantly.

“If you use your private property to carry information to the enemy, we shall confiscate it, as

we have the Hipsy," replied the officer. "If you have any message to send to your family, deliver it to your servant at once."

"I am a Kentuckian; and it is an outrage to take my property without any legal process, and I protest against it, for" —

"You may protest as much as you please, but I have no time or inclination to hear you. You may consider yourself fortunate that you have not been shot as a spy before this time, carrying information to the enemy; and it may come to that yet, though you led the enemy into a trap."

"But I" —

"Not another but, Mr. Thornfield; and if you have anything to say to your servant, say it quick," said the lieutenant very decidedly.

He told Seef that he was a close prisoner, but was very well, was fed as well as an inmate of a jail could expect to be, and his bed was good enough. Deck gently pushed the messenger out of the cell and followed him.

"What do you have to do at your master's house, Seef?" asked Deck, as he rode back to headquarters with the servant at his side.

"Almost nothing, Mars'r; I'm the overseer on the plantation, and we can't do anything on the fields at this season, it is so wet," replied the intelligent fellow.

"Can you get away for two or three days in case I should want you?" Deck inquired.

"I think so, Mars'r; missus has plenty of servants at home. What to do, Mars'r?"

"I can't tell you, Seef, yet."

"When you want me, Mars'r?"

"To-night."

"But I must go home, and tell missus that mars'r is all right if he don't get shot," replied Seef, as Deck halted before the hospital, and sent in for Dr. Farnwright to come out.

Getting out of hearing of the contraband, Deck stated the case to the surgeon in a low tone, warning him not to repeat anything he said. The doctor questioned his patient till he fully understood the duty in which he was to be engaged, and then assented to his going in the Hipsy, but warned him to use the utmost care with his arm. Then he returned to headquarters with the servant at his side.

In front of the house he dismounted, as he had last mounted, on the wrong side, without exposing his disabled member to injury. He reported to the general that he had obeyed his orders. He had before informed the commander that the Hipsy was all ready for the trip, — coaled and provisioned.

“I am afraid there is some danger attending this excursion to Somerset, as I judge that you are inclined to regard it, and you must take soldiers enough with you to protect you from an assault,” said the general.

“I don’t need many, and the launch will not accommodate much of a force; half a dozen of us will be enough,” replied Deck.

“Very well; you can select your own men.”

“They are all on board the Harbinger except one,” added Deck.

“Who is that one?”

“Seef. He knows the boat, and I suppose he knows the river. I want Corporal Milton, for he is familiar with Fishing Creek.”

“All right; take whom you please.”

“Seef will be the cook and steward, engineer

and pilot also if needed. Now I wish to take the man to his plantation in order to make sure that I have him here in the morning," continued the lieutenant. "The doctor says I am all right; and I never felt better in my life, except that I must look out for my arm."

"Manage the matter as you please, Lieutenant," added the commander.

Deck left the house, and Seef was waiting for him outside. He walked to the river with him; and they went on board of the Harbinger, and the lieutenant called upon Life for Milton and Drye, and stated that he should want Sandy Lyon and Tilford the next morning very early. He then sent Seef to fire up in the Hipsy, telling him that he would take him home.

By the time the steam was up, Milton and Drye came on board of the launch fully armed. Deck took his supper with Knox, and Seef was provided for, leaving Drye to attend to the engine. By half-past seven the boat got underway, and Seef ran her at her best speed. At the usual landing-place for the plantation, the contraband overseer went to the house. He reported

the condition of the prisoner, but he said nothing of the possibility that he might yet be shot as a spy.

He did not explain in what manner he had induced his mistress to give him leave of absence for three days, but he said he had it. He wanted to go with Deck, even though he did not know where he was going; for his kindness had made him a strong friend to the lieutenant. The launch returned to the town, and Corporals Drye and Milton slept on board of her that night. Finch called both the general and the lieutenant at five o'clock the next morning; and the former delivered a package wrapped in oilcloth to the messenger, and said some pleasant words to him at his departure.

When Deck reached the river he found that Seef was getting up steam, though Milton and Drye had not yet turned out. They were called, and Tilford and Sandy Lyon soon came on board. It was still quite dark, but Deck decided that the boat should start as soon as she had steam enough. Corporal Drye was to be the regular engineer, and Seef was relieved from duty in that

capacity, and directed to get breakfast for all hands. As the daylight began to appear in the east, the Hipsy backed out from the levee, and headed up the river. It was just the kind of an expedition which pleased Deck; for he had all the ordinary boy's fancy for exploits on the water, and he was in his element.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE HIPSY UNDER FIRE AGAIN

DECK LYON was still only eighteen years old, and there yet remained in him a great deal of the genuine boy. He was past driving hoop and playing marbles; but he could not conceal from himself that he was fond of boating and riding horseback, and that if the opportunity had presented itself before him, he would have enjoyed a game of base-ball, or to have kicked football in the old-fashioned way as it was played in the country, where barked shins and broken heads were not a necessary part of the sport.

Bar Creek and Green River, on which Riverlawn was located, had been the scene of his principal pleasures; for with the other property Major Lyon had received with the plantation were two or three boats. The Magnolia was a large sailboat, but the boys were not allowed to use that; for the father regarded it as a dangerous play-

thing for those who were not skilled in the management of such craft; and when it was used, it was rowed by six stout negroes, who had been trained to the use of the oars by Colonel Duncan Lyon, the original owner of the place.

But the boys used a small keel-boat called the canoe; and they had explored the creek and the river with it, and were always delighted with this occupation. In this manner Deck had acquired some skill and experience in the handling of boats. When his duty called him as an officer to use the confiscated steam-launch, he felt quite at home in her, though her motive-power was entirely new to him; and his most pleasing occupation was his service on the river and creeks, and flying bullets and cannon-balls about his head did not cure him of his propensity for boating. He was not an engineer, though he was theoretically acquainted with the steam-engine in a general way; and doubtless further sailing in the launch would have made him competent to run the machine.

It was not altogether because he was fond of boats, and especially of the steam-launch, that he,

rather than Lieutenant Herndon, should be sent on the expedition up the river, but because he was disabled from active duty, and his companion on the staff could be serviceable in the camp. His object was to make himself as useful as possible in his injured condition, and to have a more active person near the commander.

When he took his place in the standing-room of the Hipsy, Deck Lyon felt that he had returned to his element, though he never considered himself out of it when he was at the head of his platoon, or carrying the orders of the general. He went to the wheel, which he could handle very well with his right hand alone.

Corporal Drye was the engineer, to be relieved by Seef when not engaged in his active duties as cook and steward. The staff-officer had four corporals in his small command, not chosen because they were non-commissioned officers, but because they were the men he wanted, and with whom he had served in the field. One of the first he had selected was Corporal Winfield Milton, whom he had met when the attack on Mr. Halliburn's mansion had been made by guerillas.

He had lived all his life as boy and man within a few miles of the battlefield of Mill Springs. He was a fisherman for sport, and was familiar with all the creeks and small streams of the country; and for this knowledge, as well as because he was a very intelligent and reliable man, Deck had made him his first choice.

"I suppose you feel as though you were going home, Corporal Milton," said Deck after the Hipsy was out in the middle of the river.

"I haven't the least idea where we are going, Lieutenant, and therefore it did not occur to me that I was going in the direction of home," replied the corporal; and the four of this grade were seated on the divan that surrounded the wheel.

"Did you ever steer a boat, Milton?" asked the lieutenant, without informing him of the destination of the launch.

"I have steered the flatboats on the creeks when I have been out fishing. I used to know a fellow who was assistant pilot on a steamboat, and I went down to Nashville on his boat once. I spent a good deal of the time when he was on duty with him, and I saw how the steering was

done; but that is all I know about it," replied the corporal.

"The first thing for you to learn on this trip is to steer the launch," added Deck.

"It looks easy enough."

"It is easy enough when you know how. I never steered with a wheel till I tried it in this boat day before yesterday; so I am not much ahead of you, though I am used to keel-boats," continued the lieutenant.

"I got some idea of the thing when I was on the trip with Gookill; but he would not let me steer the boat," Milton explained. "I think I could do it after a little practice."

"I am sure you could."

"When you pull the top of the wheel towards you, it turns the boat to the left," said the corporal.

"You can see the tiller, and the tiller-ropes that lead from the drum of the wheel to the end of it. When I pull the wheel over towards me, it winds up the rope on the drum from the opposite side, and that draws the tiller towards the port side, and that is putting the helm to port. When

I turn the wheel from me, it winds up on the other side, and puts the tiller over to the starboard side," Deck demonstrated, illustrating his remarks with the movements of the wheel.

"I see what you mean. When you want to go to the left, you put the wheel to port."

"No, you don't!" exclaimed the lieutenant. "You put the tiller in the opposite direction from that you wish to go. Starboard the helm sends the boat to port."

"I see; I have got it now," said Milton, quite delighted with his proficiency.

"If you do, you may take the wheel," added Deck.

It was fairly daylight by this time, and the Hipsy was in the middle of the river. The corporal rose from his seat, and took his place on the starboard, or right-hand side, of the wheel, laying hold of the spokes. "Though you could steer the boat standing on that side, I believe it is the rule to stand on the port side," Deck interposed. "I always sat on the port side when I steered a boat on Bar Creek, and it comes handy to me to be on that side."

The corporal took his place on the left; and for an hour Deck instructed him in all he knew about steering with a wheel, which was not much. By this time he had got the hang of the wheel, and steered very well. He was pleased with the occupation, and had given his whole mind to it. He was not only intelligent, but he was ingenious, and could readily see into what was perplexing to most men.

“Breakfast on the table, Mars’r,” said Seef, coming aft. “Shall I take the wheel, Mars’r Lieutenant?”

“I will stay here while you eat your breakfast,” interposed the corporal.

“I am not quite willing to leave you at the helm alone, Milton, till you have had a little more experience,” Deck objected. “Seef will steer while the rest of us are at the table.”

“All right, Lieutenant,” replied the corporal as he yielded the wheel to the steward.

“After a while we shall come to water where you will be the only man on board who is competent to pilot the boat,” added Deck, as they went forward to the cabin.

Seef had evidently "laid himself out" on the breakfast, for the table would not have disgraced any decent hotel. His facilities for cooking were on a limited scale; but his ham and eggs looked as nice as though they had been cooked by Diana, — not Dinah, as she insisted upon adding when she gave her name, — the housekeeper at the Riverlawn mansion. The coffee, with its color changed by the addition of milk this time, was also as nice as though the coffee-pot had been presided over by the same immaculate Diana, not by Dinah, who was Deck Lyon's belle-ideal of a cook.

The ship's company, including those who were simply marines, praised the principal dish and the coffee, both in their speech and by the quantity they consumed. Corporal Sandy Lyon, a cousin of Deck, who had followed his father into the Confederate forces, but had run away with his brother in disgust before the enemy's supplies arrived at Bowling Green, hinted that he should like to know where the expedition was bound. He had done his duty faithfully, and had fought bravely on the field, and had earned his promo-

tion in the Union service ; but Deck did not open his mouth.

“Boat coming out from the Tennessee shore !” shouted Corporal Drye from the engine, as he walked towards the cabin-door.

“What does she look like ?” asked the lieutenant, who was seated next to the door at the head of the table.

“There are not less than six men in it, and perhaps more,” replied the engineer. “It is a large flatboat, and it came out of a creek some distance ahead of us. I reckon some of the people that live along the river here would like to get hold of this boat, for she would be very useful to them.”

“Are they soldiers ?” asked Deck.

“I reckon they are ; but I’m not sure of it. For the last half-hour they could see only Seef and me in the boat, and I reckon they think it is a good chance for them to get her,” replied Drye, as he took another look at the flatboat. “They are pulling their boat to a point just ahead of the Hipsy.”

By this time all at the table had finished

their breakfast, and rose from their seats on the transom, where the beds were made up at night.

“Sit down again!” exclaimed the lieutenant very decidedly. “Not a man must show himself without orders.”

The men were curious to see the approaching boat, but they promptly obeyed the order. Deck did not claim to be a strategist; but others, including General Woodbine, gave him the credit of considerable skill in that direction. He seemed always to know what to do when an emergency came, and the three corporals with him saw he had a plan in his fertile brain. Drye went back to the engine, and continued to observe the flatboat.

After shovelling more coal into the furnace, he went to the cabin and borrowed Deck’s field-glass, which he brought to bear upon the craft. He looked at her attentively for some minutes. He made out two things, — that the men wore the gray uniform, and that they were provided with muskets, which he reported to the lieutenant. A little later he discovered three more men in the flatboat, who had perhaps been asleep

on the bottom before, of which he also informed his officer.

“Corporal Milton, do you think it probable that the news of our fights with the steamers has travelled up the river as far as this?” asked Deck in the cabin.

“How far up the river have we come, Lieutenant?” asked the corporal.

“The current is against us, but I should say about fifteen miles,” replied Deck after consulting his watch.

“I would wager two catfish against a doodlebug that people on both sides know about our two fights with the steamers,” replied Milton, taking from his pocket half a sheet of a newspaper, and pointing out a full account of the affairs to the lieutenant.

“When was this issued?”

“I got it yesterday morning, and probably it has gone all over the county by this time,” answered the corporal.

Deck looked over the article. It was an extra of a Union paper; and near the end of it, the Hipsy was mentioned by her full name in stating

how the fight with the New Moon had begun. It reported that the steam-launch had been taken by the Union forces.

"If we are only fifteen miles from Barkville, that paper has been read in nearly every white man's house in this vicinity," said Milton, as Deck returned the paper to him.

"What boat's that?" demanded a voice from outside, just as the lieutenant finished his hasty examination of the extra. "Tell him she is the Hipsy of Marrow Creek," he added, opening the door he had closed before just wide enough to permit him to speak to the engineer, who had deemed it wise to shelter his body behind the engine.

"We want that boat!" yelled the same voice.

"You can't have her!" replied Corporal Drye in the same vigorous tone.

There were two square windows on each side of the cabin, and one in the forward end. The lieutenant had forbidden his men to look out at these openings when they attempted to do so. Seated on the transom, their heads could not be seen; and Deck would not exhibit his force till

the occasion required. Seef had imitated the example of "mars'r" at the wheel by lying down on the floor of the standing-room, and steered with the wheel over his head.

Drye hurried the boat all he could; and as she was passing the flat a volley of musketry was fired into her, but no one was hit. Milton was ordered to fire from the window over his head, and the man who was steering with an oar dropped into the bottom of his boat.

CHAPTER XIX

THE END OF THE AFFAIR WITH THE FLAT

THOUGH the volley fired from the flatboat had harmed no one on board of the Hipsy, the enemy, as the nine men had by this time proved themselves to be, brought their boat about, and pursued the launch astern of her. They had done no injury before for the simple reason that they could see no one on board; four of the party being in the cabin with the door closed, the engineer concealing himself behind the upright engine, and the helmsman lying on his back under the wheel.

“This won’t do!” exclaimed Lieutenant Lyon, as he realized the situation of his little force, with the flat astern of the Hipsy in such a position that the enemy could rake her fore and aft; and they were now firing as fast as their flint-locks could be loaded. “Tell Seef to come about, and head the launch for the Kentucky shore, Corporal Drye.”

He opened the door just enough to permit him to speak to the engineer; but the glance enabled him to see the craft astern more clearly than he had observed it before through the open window, which was not more than nine inches square.

"Did you see the boat, Lieutenant?" asked Milton.

"Very distinctly," replied Deck. "She is very long, and sits lightly on the water. She has six men at the oars; and they are sending her ahead at great speed for such a craft, and I should say they were making six miles an hour."

"There are not many of that kind of boats on this part of the river, but I have seen one of them catch up with a steamer," added Milton.

"It must have been a very slow steamer," replied the lieutenant. "We are not making more than eight miles an hour against the current, though Drye is hurrying her now."

As he spoke, two bullets came through the door of the cabin, one of them smashing the lantern that was suspended over the table, and scattering the glass on the heads of the men.

"That looks like business," said Corporal Til-

ford — who was a man of forty, and was regarded as a sort of veteran, for he had seen more service than most of the party — with a smile, for he seemed to have no idea of the sensation of fear.

“Very like business, Tilford; and at this rate we shall be picked off in time, though none of us have yet been hit,” added Deck, as he opened the door a little so that he could observe the present situation; for Seef had brought the boat about, and she was now moving towards the north shore.

But the long boat had followed suit, and was still pursuing the launch, the oarsmen straining themselves to the utmost. The enemy had not come about as readily as the Hipsy had done, and they had lost some of the distance that separated the two combatants, and Deck saw the flat over the starboard quarter of the launch. The ruffians were too busy with their oars just then to make a good use of their muskets; though two of the extra men who had been counted, one of whom had fallen before the shot of Milton from the window in the stern, were still using their weapons, though with no effect, for they could see no one on the little steamer.

“Don’t go out, Lieutenant Lyon!” exclaimed Milton, as Deck opened the door enough to permit his passage into the waist; you will certainly be shot if you show yourself!”

“I can’t help it if I am; I can’t stand this any longer. We shall be shot if something is not done,” replied Deck, as he stooped low, and went into the waist.

He placed the engine between himself and the enemy, and advanced to the side of the engineer.

“Have you got on all the steam she will bear, Corporal?” he asked.

“I think so; at any rate, I will not risk any more, for I had rather be shot than blowed up, as the less of two evils,” replied Drye, keeping himself behind the boiler as the long boat changed her relative position. “Seef knows this machine better than I do; if you will let me steer the boat, and call him to the engine, I think we shall do better.”

“We are moving at more than eight miles an hour across the current, and you are going fast enough,” added Deck, as an idea seemed to take sudden possession of his active brain.

Stooping as low as he could and move, he crawled into the standing-room, and placed himself at the side of Seef. The flat, as the craft is generally called, sat low in the water, so that the enemy while seated could not see over the rail of the launch. Deck cautiously raised his head to obtain another sight at the flat, for he was intent upon the execution of the plan he had in his head. It was moving diagonally with the course of the river towards the Hipsy, and not more than a hundred feet distant from her.

"Come about as short as you can, Seef, and head her for the Tennessee shore," said the lieutenant.

"I can't see anything outside from here, Mars'r," replied Seef, as he threw the wheel over.

"That's all right, Seef ; you steer as I tell you, and don't raise your head where it can be seen by the enemy," added Deck, as he saw the boat coming about.

Then he crawled forward, as the launch was still swinging, as far as the engine, where he stopped to take another view of the flat from the friendly shelter of the boiler.

"We are coming about, Lieutenant," said Corporal Drye when the officer was at his side.

"Exactly so, and I intend to make an end of that flat before she is ten minutes older than she is now," answered Deck, with his teeth set firmly, as though he was bent on some desperate purpose.

But he was not in a talking mood just then; and he gave his whole attention to the enemy, who seemed to be very much perplexed by the movements of the Hipsy, and just then they seemed to be jawing with each other angrily, as though there was a decided difference of opinion among them. In the wrangle they were neglecting their own boat, and even the two men in the bow had ceased to fire in their interest in the discussion; but they were loading their muskets, and presently resumed the work for which they had been stationed forward.

"The ruffians are disputing about what they had better do," said Deck.

"We have not lost a man yet, and I hope we shall not," replied the engineer. "Those fellows might as well shoot with a gridiron as with those old flint-locks."

"I don't intend to lose a man," answered Deck, as he lay down, and crawled forward to the door of the cabin.

The launch had now come about far enough to be headed directly towards the flat, and was still a hundred feet from it after the circuit she had taken in coming about. But the eight men in the other boat were evidently beginning to realize that they were swallowing their own heads in abandoning both their oars and their muskets.

They appeared to conclude that as the Hipsy was headed directly towards them, it was useless for them to row; and they suddenly grasped their muskets, and opened a brisk fire upon her. The flat was now in the current; and though the robbers attempted to stand when they fired, the boat was evidently too unsteady for them to do so, as the flow created something like small rollers on the surface.

The lieutenant opened the door of the cabin, and left it so, as the enemy's craft was not directly ahead, and there was no danger to the party inside. In the waist, on the flooring at the bottom of the launch, was the furnace on which

Seef did the cooking. It was a cast-iron affair, not much larger than an ordinary bucket (there are no pails in the West), lined with fire-brick, in which a charcoal fire was made. It rested on a stand of wood about four feet square, covered with sheet-iron to prevent the boat from being set on fire.

Deck's attention was directed to this stand, as he had no use for the furnace; and he called out Milton and Tilford just as a bullet passed through the forward part of the cabin, and lodged in one of the small beams overhead. He directed the two men to remove the furnace, and set the stand up edgewise.

"Corporal Drye," called the lieutenant.

"Here, sir."

"Tell Seef to come about again."

The launch began to turn once more; and Deck at the right time directed the two corporals forward to move the stand to the bow, where it was placed with the sheet-iron outside, against the front of the cabin. Remaining on the bottom of the boat, where they could not be seen by the enemy, they adjusted and secured this screen.

Then they crawled back to the cabin-door, and went in.

“Corporal Drye, tell Seef to come about again, and head the launch directly for the flat; and I will tell him how to steer.”

Deck heard the engineer deliver his order to the helmsman, and then closed the cabin-door. Moving aft, he joined the engineer when the boat had come about, keeping the boiler between himself and the enemy, who were industriously loading and firing their muskets. They could see no one on board of the Hipsy; for Deck had insisted from the beginning that not a man should show his head above the rail, which non-nautical readers should understand means the upper part of the sides of the boat; and the firing had thus far hurt no one.

“Now give her all the speed you can, Corporal Drye,” said Deck; and the engineer threw more coal into the furnace.

“Starboard a little!” called the lieutenant to the pilot. “Steady!”

The last word meant “Keep her as she is;” and Seef was familiar with these technical words.

"I see what you are driving at, Lieutenant," said the engineer with a smile.

"All right, then keep her moving; but keep your hand near the safety-valve, for she may come to a sudden halt," added Deck.

"I don't believe she will," answered Drye decidedly; and he was much more familiar with steamboats than the officer in command.

All the ruffians in the flat had boated their oars, and were using their muskets diligently; and, as the Hipsy came nearer the enemy, the bullets rattled against the iron screen in front of the cabin, and not a few struck the boiler, but fortunately the iron of both was strong enough to resist them. Without the precautions the lieutenant had taken to protect them, certainly one-half of the party, if not the whole of them, would have been killed or wounded.

Neither Deck nor Drye was disposed to talk any more; though they were not dismayed by the rattle of the bullets, but were in a lively state of expectancy. When it was too late, the ruffians seemed to come to a realizing sense of what the officer in command of the boat intended to do;

and they seized their oars in desperation. But some of them pulled one way, and some the other, in their confusion and terror; and their efforts tended to keep the flat where she was, rather than take her out of the impending peril.

The engineer had all the steam he could use, and he used it all. The screw flew around as though it had a fit, and the launch darted ahead with the active current as though it was in full sympathy with Deck's movement.

"Hold on!" shouted the ruffian in the stern of the boat who had been using a steering-oar. "You will run us down!"

The lieutenant vouchsafed no reply to this cry, and a moment later the Hipsy struck the flat with her sharp bow; but the collision did not stop her, as Deck supposed it would, but cut her in halves as neatly as a big knife could have done it, and passed over her, leaving the parts on each side of her.

One man climbed into the launch over the bow, but the others were all thrown into the water. The Hipsy continued on her course as though nothing had happened, while the escaping steam

hissed and roared so that the cries of the ruffians in the river could scarcely be heard.

"Come about, Seef!" called the lieutenant. "You can stand up now, for there is no danger;" and the contraband stood up like "a man and a brother."

The three corporals came out of the cabin, and moved aft. Of course they were delighted with the result of the affair.

"Excuse me for saying so, Lieutenant, but you managed this thing mighty well!" exclaimed Tilford.

"That's so!" added Milton.

"So say we all of us!" Corporal Sandy Lyon chimed in.

"Thank you; but this is no time for compliments," replied Deck.

CHAPTER XX

IN THE PRESENCE OF A GREAT COMMANDER

THE soldiers on board of the Hipsy, with the exception of Corporal Drye at the engine, had no idea of what was coming till the launch struck the long boat; and even Seef, who was steering the boat, did not suspect the design of the lieutenant, for he was lying on his back, with his head against the after stanchion of the wheel. When he could see anything outside of the boat, it was over the stern.

In obedience to the order of Deck, the helmsman had brought the launch about. The engineer had let off steam till the boat ceased to shake and tremble as though she were going to pieces. Those who had come out of the cabin were looking at the seven ruffians in the water; for Deck applied this term to them because they seemed so much like the villains who had attempted to mob and burn the mansion of his

father, and with whom the battle of Riverlawn had been fought.

They were clinging to the wreck of the flat. Their oars were floating about them, and doubtless their muskets had gone to the bottom of the river. They were evidently alarmed at their situation, for some of them were shouting for help. One of them had lost his hold upon the wreck, and was struggling in the water at a little distance from the others as though he could not swim. The rest of them did not go to his assistance, and possibly none of them could swim.

"Head her for the wreck, Seef," said the lieutenant as soon as the launch had been brought about; for after it had passed over the flat the Hipsy had gone some two hundred feet while those on board of her were coming to a realizing sense of what had occurred.

"Some of those fellows will drown if we don't pick them up soon," said Deck as he stood near the engineer.

"Are you going to pick them up, Lieutenant?" asked Corporal Drye, apparently surprised at the remark of the commander of the expedition.

"Certainly I am; do you think I would let them drown before my face and eyes?" replied Deck.

"They are all Confederates, and ruffians at that," added the engineer.

"No matter what they are; they are human beings."

"They got into the scrape, and I should let them get out of it as they can," growled Drye.

"Were you in favor of letting those on board of the New Moon burn to death or drown?"

"Well, no; that was different."

"I don't see that it was. The soldiers on board of her got into the scrape themselves, and Captain Batterson might as well have said that they might get out of it as they could," argued the lieutenant. "He did not say so, but did the utmost he could to save every man in peril; and we did the same in the Hipsy."

"These fellows are ruffians and villains, and they came off to steal the launch from you."

"Precisely as we stole the Harbinger from the enemy."

"I suppose you are right, Lieutenant Lyon;

but somehow I can't look at these ruffians as regular soldiers, carrying on war upon Christian principles," added the corporal, evidently ashamed of the position he had taken.

"They are not regular soldiers ; but I cannot stand by and see seven men drown before my eyes. I am afraid I should have had dreams if I did such a thing," said Deck, as the boat was approaching the scene of the disaster.

"It is lucky for them that you are in command, Lieutenant," replied Drye, relapsing from a growl to a smile.

"Go forward, all of you," continued Deck, addressing the three corporals who stood in the waist. "Haul in those men as fast as you can, for we have lost time enough in this business."

The trio of corporals obeyed the order, and in a few minutes the ruffians were dragged into the launch. There were eight of them now, including the one who had climbed into the launch at the time of the collision.

"They are in the majority now on board, and they may try again to capture the launch," suggested the engineer while the others were forward.

"They have lost their muskets in the smash, and they are hardly in fighting condition," replied Deck, though the idea made an impression upon him.

He was disabled himself, though he could use his revolver, and Seef was a non-combatant: the remaining four left the ruffians two to their one; and even without arms they could make a great deal of trouble. But all the corporals were fully armed, and brought their usual weapons on board.

"All in!" shouted Tilford, when they had rescued all the party from their moist situation.

"Keep them where they are!" returned the lieutenant. "Now, Seef, head the boat for the Tennessee shore; for we won't spill them out in Kentucky. Do you know a good landing-place?"

"I can see the mouth of the creek where that flat came out," replied the helmsman; and he threw the wheel over, and directed the Hipsy to the point he indicated.

"Excuse me, Seef, but it just occurs to me that you have not been to breakfast yet!" exclaimed Deck.

"I'm not starving, Mars'r," replied the pilot with a cheerful grin.

"But go and get your breakfast at once, and I will steer while you are getting it. You can fire up the furnace again, and cook something for yourself. As you go forward, ask Tilford to help you return the furnace stand where it belongs, and tell the corporal I wish to speak to him."

The lieutenant took the wheel with his right hand, and fixed his eyes upon the opening the contraband had pointed out to him. The three men forward assisted in moving the screen, and Tilford presented himself at the wheel.

"Those ruffians number two to our one, Corporal, and three of you must watch them closely. Have your revolvers ready for instant use," said Deck.

"I noticed some of them whispering together," replied the veteran, as he was often called in his company; not that he had been longer in the service than some of them, but because he was an older man.

"Put your revolver where you can place your hand on it at once, and tell the other of our

men to do the same. Now go back, and keep your eyes wide open tight all the time."

The corporal hastened forward, having thrust his revolver into his belt. His companions followed his example at a sign he gave them; but he called them back into the space between the rail and the cabin, for he perceived that the weapons were in a convenient position to be seized by the prisoners if they wished to attempt a demonstration.

Seef did not delay to cook bacon and eggs for his breakfast, or even to heat up the coffee-pot, but returned to the wheel with part of his breakfast in his hand. He took the helm, continuing to eat till he had finished the meal. It was not a great distance to the south side of the river, and the wheelman soon brought her to a landing-place in the creek. Deck went forward where he could see the ruffians leave the boat.

But they did not appear to be willing to go on shore. Milton advanced nearer to them, telling them to jump ashore. Suddenly the leader of the gang sprang upon him, and, as the vet-

eran had suggested, attempted to get hold of the revolver in his belt. He found he had tackled the wrong man; for Milton was a stalwart fellow, and hit the ruffian a blow on the head with his fist which knocked him back into the fore-sheets. The rest of them sprang to his assistance as he advanced again; and then a ball from Deck's revolver dropped him, and he did not move again. Milton fired at the next man, and he joined his leader in the bottom of the launch.

The rest of them were intimidated by this quick work, and fell back.

“On shore, or we will shoot the rest of you!” shouted Tilford.

At this point Seef rushed forward with the spare tiller in his hand, and wanted to take part in the affray; but he was too late to be of any service, and Milton took the tiller from him, and with it hastened the movements of the conspirators, knocking them on the head or the shins as was most convenient to him.

But the ruffians were in a hurry by this time, and they soon tumbled out of the boat. Milton and the others lifted the two who had fallen

over the rail without knowing whether they were dead or only wounded. Seef had hastened to the wheel as soon as he saw that he was not needed; but he had proved that he was a Union man at heart, and was willing to assist the loyal soldiers.

“Back her, Drye!” called Deck to him as soon as he had grasped the spokes; and the engineer started the screw.

The launch backed away from the shore, and then went ahead into the river again. The course up-stream was renewed, and the former routine was restored. Long as it has taken to relate the occurrences, not more than half an hour had been consumed in the struggle. Of course the party felt happy in the fact that they had beaten the enemy without the loss of a man, and without a wound on the person of any one of them. Tilford seemed to like the bow of the launch; and he placed himself there as though he desired to view the scenery, consisting most of the time of high banks; but Deck instructed him to keep a sharp lookout for enemies.

The others gathered in the standing-room, and

talked over the exciting events of the morning. Doubtless the Hipsy was coveted by many who saw her from the shores as she went up the river, but no other attempt was made to capture her. At noon Milton was directed to take the wheel, and Seef went forward to get dinner.

The distance in a straight line from Barkville to the point on the river which Deck wished to reach was not more than thirty-five miles ; but the bends in the stream increased it to over fifty, and the objective point of the lieutenant was nearly reached at noon. The locality was more familiar to Deck than lower down ; and when he passed the great bend, where he had seen four deserters from the Confederate army drowned, and where Knox and himself had crossed the stream when they set out on their spy trip into Tennessee, he looked for old Cuffy the ferryman, but he was not to be seen.

“I suppose you know where we are, Lieutenant Lyon,” said Milton.

“I think I do,” replied Deck.

“Yonder is the mouth of Fishing Creek, and Mill Springs is on our right,” continued Milton.

"Dinner is all ready, gentlemen!" called Seef from the waist, where he did the cooking.

"Keep it hot for fifteen minutes, Seef," returned the lieutenant.

"Now you can see the mouth of Fishing Creek very plainly," said the wheelman.

"Perhaps I have not mentioned it before, but we are bound up that creek," said Deck.

"Up Fishing Creek!" exclaimed Milton.

"We will tie up at the mouth of it for dinner," added the lieutenant.

At the place indicated, the helmsman ran the bow up to a tree, where Tilford made fast the painter to it. All hands then went into the cabin for dinner. Beefsteak was the principal dish, and it was very tough; but soldiers were trained to use their jaws, and they were glad enough to get beef at all, and they did not complain. With potatoes, coffee, and bread, and a few condiments, it was a better dinner than had been set before them for a long time.

"How deep is Fishing Creek, Corporal Milton?" asked Deck when the party had taken the rough edge off their hunger.

"It varies from four feet down to one."

"How far up can you take the Hipsy?"

"To the Hudson Road. But you have not told me where you wish to go, and I cannot tell you where it is best for you to land," replied Milton.

"I wish to go to Somerset," replied the lieutenant.

"Then we need not go up Fishing Creek at all. If you go up that stream, you will have to walk about twice as far as you will if you follow the river to the ford on the Monticello Road, only a mile from Somerset."

"Then we will go to the ford;" and when Tilford had cast off the painter from the tree, the launch continued a mile and a half farther up the stream.

At the ford the lieutenant had Seef brush his uniform, and hooked on his sabre at the belt. Corporal Milton was appointed to go with him, and they walked up the road together. In half an hour the staff-officer stood in the presence of General Thomas.

CHAPTER XXI

ANOTHER TRIP UP THE CUMBERLAND

LIEUTENANT LYON'S staff uniform procured him prompt admission to the presence of General Thomas, who had just gained the battle of Mill Springs, the first decided victory in the West; he was then a brigadier-general, and he had won but a tithe of the distinction which awaited him. He was a Virginian by birth; but he belonged to the whole nation, and when others forgot it, and remembered only the State in which they were born or resided, he was a man of broader views, and remained faithful in the service for which his country had prepared him.

He was a noble-looking man, tall, and with a heavy frame, but with a mild and pleasant expression on his face which won the hearts of those with whom he came in contact, as it did the writer's when he had the honor to be presented to him upon the platform on which Gen-

eral Grant had just been inaugurated President of the United States. At the same time he was introduced to half a dozen others of the most distinguished commanders of the War of the Rebellion.

Thomas was the beau-ideal of a soldier, and he was as large and noble in his soul as he was in his splendid physique; and not a few regarded him as the ablest military commander of the war, though he was never placed in the position to direct the movements of the entire army, as were Grant and McClellan.

He received Lieutenant Lyon pleasantly, but with his native dignity; and his winning smile was on his face when he took the papers from General Woodbine, and looked in the eye of the young man who delivered them. In fact, he regarded him with no little attention; but Deck had schooled himself for this occasion, and was careful that he displayed his form at his full height, and kept his head erect as a soldier should. But he was modest while he did not depreciate himself, and he could not have made himself look otherwise if he had tried.

"Lieutenant Lyon, I think was the name announced to me," said the general, after he had looked over the bearer of despatches.

"Lieutenant Lyon, General, a messenger from General Woodbine, whose despatches I have just delivered," replied Deck, with his most graceful bow.

"He is down the river now. I suppose you found the roads still very muddy on your ride here, Lieutenant," added the commander, as he pointed to a camp-stool for the messenger, and seated himself upon another.

"I did not come by the roads, but by the river," replied Deck, as he seated himself after the commander had done so.

"By the river?" repeated the general interrogatively, and not with an exclamation. "Have you steamers at your camp on the river?"

"We have one, a rather large one, and we destroyed one the other day; but I made my trip in a steam-launch, which is now at the ford on the Monticello Road."

"But where did you get your steam-launch?"

"It was taken from a spy who was using it

to convey information to the enemy," answered the messenger.

"Had you any difficulty in making your way up the river?"

"A little; a gang of nine ruffians from the Tennessee side attacked us not far from Baker's Town," replied Deck; and he related the result of the affair.

"You made short work with them," added the general with a smile. "How many men had you, Lieutenant?"

"I had four corporals, and a colored man who is the servant of the spy now in the jail."

"They were two to your one, then."

"Yes, sir; but I could not stop to bother with them, and made an end of the business in a hurry. We picked up the men when their boat was cut in halves, and landed them in their own State. They made another fight when we landed them, and we were obliged to shoot a couple of them."

"I have heard of you before, Lieutenant Lyon; and Woodbine told me about your affair with a company of Confederate cavalry who wanted one of our trains. I am glad to see you. You be-

long to the Riverlawn Cavalry, who have rendered important service in suppressing guerillas and other foragers. Now, if you will amuse yourself for half an hour, I will look at your despatches, and write a letter to Woodbine."

Deck bowed; and the commander called a lieutenant on his staff, and introduced the messenger to him. They left the tent together, and were soon well acquainted. Lieutenant Blood pointed out to him some of the localities of the late battle that were in sight; but he did it mechanically, as though it were an old story to him.

"Didn't I hear you say something about a steam-launch to the general, in which you came up the river, Lieutenant?" asked the officer.

"I spoke of such a boat; and I came up the river in the Hipsy, as she is called."

"Where is the Hipsy now?" he inquired with more interest than he had spoken before.

Deck told him where she was; and Lieutenant Blood pointed to half a dozen horses saddled and bridled, and picketed near the headquarters for use as needed. He proposed to ride down to the river, for he desired very much to see the launch.

They galloped down the road, and in a few minutes reached the river. The four corporals were on shore ; and, giving the reins to them, they boarded the boat, and Deck showed the officer over her.

“I have a steam-launch of about that size at Louisville where I live ; and that accounts for my interest in the Hipsy. But it is time for us to return,” said Lieutenant Blood ; and they were soon at the headquarters.

When they went to the general’s tent they found him walking up and down in deep thought. But he had finished his letter, and handed it to the messenger.

“I want to see General Woodbine more than I can explain to you, Lieutenant Lyon, and you must bring him to headquarters in your steam-launch ; for that is a good way to get about in this country while the roads are in such bad condition,” said General Thomas.

“I am at General Woodbine’s orders,” replied Deck. “I will take my leave now, if you have no further instructions to give me.”

“None ; I am very glad to have seen you, and

we may meet again," added the commander, bowing him out.

Lieutenant Blood put him and Corporal Milton on a couple of horses, and rode with them to the river, though the latter modestly kept behind them. Deck shook hands with the officer, and they embarked at once, their horses let loose to find the way back to the camp. Tilford hauled in the painter, the Hipsy backed away from the shore, came about, and began her voyage down the river with Milton at the wheel. It was half-past two by Deck's watch; and if the trip was not interrupted as it was in coming up, he expected to make the distance in about six hours.

Fortunately no ruffians appeared to intercept them; Seef was in charge of the engine, and was instructed to make his best time. He did so, and the Hipsy came alongside the Harbinger a few minutes past eight. Deck hastened to the general's headquarters without the loss of a moment, and delivered the letter of which he was the bearer.

"You made a quick trip, Lieutenant," said the general, after he had read the letter.

“Not so quick as it would have been by half an hour if we had not been attacked on the river,” replied Deck; and he was obliged to repeat the story of the encounter with the ruffians, to which the commander listened with the deepest interest.

“You were very prompt and decided with them, Lieutenant, as you always are; and served them right, for they were nothing but bushwhackers, and wanted the launch for guerilla raids on this side of the river. You have done good service, and I thank you for it,” said General Woodbine, inviting him to be seated. “Now, Lieutenant Lyon, I want you to repeat the trip at once, with me as your passenger.”

“I obey your orders, whatever they are, General,” replied Deck. “When do we start?”

“About one o’clock in the morning; and you had better go to bed now, and get all the sleep you can. The doctor is coming this evening to see your arm. Who shall go with you this time?”

“Seef and the same four corporals,” replied Deck; and he retired to his room, and put himself between the sheets.

The commander then sent Finch to the door to call in two of the mounted sentinels there, who presently came into the office. He directed one of them to ride to the Harbinger, and order Lieutenant Knox to retain Seef and the four corporals on board of the steamer, send them to bed at once, and have them in readiness for service at one in the morning.

Then he sent the other to the hospital to inform Dr. Farnwright that Deck was ready to see him, and then to find the man who kept the tin-and-stove shop, and require his presence at headquarters immediately. Deck was tired after his day's work, for he was not as tough as he would be when fully grown; and he dropped asleep as soon as he struck the bed, but Finch awoke him when the doctor came. After a little chat, the surgeon examined his arm, and dressed the wound again. He said it was doing finely, and evidently had not been disturbed during the day.

"I have not used my left arm at all, and steered the launch with the right alone," said Deck.

"Very well; and if you are as careful as you

have been, your arm will be all right in less than a week," added Dr. Farnwright, taking leave of his patient, who turned over and went to sleep again.

Then the surgeon looked in at the office, and saw Pottle, the tin and sheet-iron worker, there. He had just come; and the general was describing the furnace stand of the launch to him, used as a screen to keep the bullets of the enemy from penetrating the woodwork of the cabin.

"I want three of them, made of the thickest sheet-iron you have," added the commander.

"I have the thickest there is made," replied Pottle.

"Have you any workmen in your employ?"

"I have three men that I call in when I need them; but there is not business enough for me to keep them all the time," replied the tinman.

"Drum them up immediately, and as many carpenters to make the frames," said the commander rather impatiently. "I must have these screens by midnight."

Pottle promised that they should be ready and on board of the Harbinger at the time designated.

He hurried away, wondering what great enterprise was now engaging the attention of the commander, who went to his chamber as soon as the man left.

Probably he did not sleep as soundly as the lieutenant on the lower floor of the house. Whether he did or not, Finch called both of the sleepers at half-past twelve. Horses and a guard were at the door waiting for them, and in fifteen minutes they were on the deck of the Harbinger. The screens were there, and so were Seef and the four corporals. Knox had caused the Hipsy to be hauled alongside the forecastle; and the three screens, which were larger than that for the furnace, were placed around the cabin, though they could be moved to more exposed points if needed.

Seef had procured the provisions and supplies for the trip, as Knox had directed him. The general asked Lieutenant Lyon if they had not better take more men, but Deck thought they would only be in the way. The commander delivered a letter to Lieutenant Knox for Major Lyon, in which the command of the force was passed over to him during his absence.

Promptly at the appointed time, the launch backed away from the steamer, and then pointed her bow up the river, with Seef at the engine, and Milton at the wheel, the latter being better acquainted with the river than any other person on board. The general went into the cabin, which Seef had lighted, and lay down in one of the berths; and the lieutenant did the same in the other. They had six hours before them in which they could do nothing better than sleep.

“I telegraphed to the general that I should be at the ford at seven o’clock to-morrow morning,” said the commander. “They are keeping the wires in order, and I think he will get the message.”

They went to sleep to the music of the thumping screw. The three corporals not employed stretched themselves on the cushions of the divan in the standing-room, covered themselves with the blankets brought from the state-rooms of the Harbinger, and went to sleep. The pilot had nothing to do but keep the Hipsy in the middle of the river.

Seef, as he had been instructed, kept the boat

going at her usual rate till daylight in the morning, occasionally talking with the pilot. A little later, Seef declared that there were a lot of men and horses at the ford, which he could see half a mile ahead. Milton called the sleepers near him, and asked Tilford to wake those in the cabin. Deck looked at his watch, and saw that it was quarter of seven, and an escort was waiting for the general at the landing-place.

CHAPTER XXII

DECK FINDS THE RIVER BLOCKADED

GENERAL WOODBINE was received at the ford by the officer commanding the escort, and conducted to the headquarters of General Thomas; and of course Lieutenant Lyon accompanied him. After breakfast came the conference between the superior officers, and Lieutenant Blood took Deck in charge again. He was on the staff of the commanding general, and probably he knew more about the intended movements of the army than Deck; but he was quite as discreet as that young officer, and he had no news to tell beyond what was current in the army.

But it was no secret that an attempt would be made to break the line of defence the Confederates had established through the length of Kentucky. The iron-clad gunboats of Commodore Foote were at Cairo; and some of them had made a reconnaissance up the Tennessee River, and had

obtained the bearings of Fort Henry, which was the first of the enemy's works east of Columbus and Hickman on the Mississippi River. The next was Fort Donelson on the Cumberland, and then Bowling Green. The fortifications in the vicinity of Mill Springs had been rendered useless by the defeat and dispersion of General George B. Crittenden, who should not be confounded with Thomas L., the Union general.

It was understood that this line of defence should be still further broken at the two strong forts upon which the enemy relied to hold the West, and there was floating in the air of the various camps a rumor of stirring military events in the near future. Deck Lyon had the impression that the visit of General Woodbine to Somerset had something to do with a general moving of the Army of the Ohio, though he had no idea of its nature.

After breakfast the two generals were alone at the headquarters of General Thomas, and they talked about matters that were not understood outside of the tent of the commander. They were friends of long standing, and had been stu-

dents at West Point together; but Thomas had remained in the army, while Woodbine, after creditable service in Mexico, had resigned, and made a considerable fortune in New York, and then settled in Eastern Kentucky, where he had become one of the influential men of the section.

“Woodbine, I can’t stand it any longer to leave you in command of such an inadequate force as you have at present,” said General Thomas, with the pleasant smile playing about his mouth. “You are competent for bigger things; and I cannot forget your good work in the battles at Monterey and Buena Vista, and you must have your sphere enlarged.”

“I obey orders, as I always did,” replied Woodbine.

“You accepted your commission at the eleventh hour; but it is absurd for a brigadier-general to remain in command of three companies of cavalry and a battery,” added Thomas; and as intimate friends they dropped their titles when alone.

“But I respectfully submit that my small command has rendered good service since its or-

ganization. The fact is that I am not ambitious for military distinction; and nothing but a war for the preservation of the Union, which I believe in with all my mind, heart, and soul, would have drawn me away from my mountain home."

"I know you are a patriot of the highest order, Woodbine; and the service you have rendered on the river, as well as at Mill Springs, is important, and I have commended you properly in my reports," replied Thomas. "But I must give you a full brigade; for my conscience will not permit me to allow you to waste your talent in petty affairs. We are on the eve of important operations, and you must not hide your light beneath a bushel."

"A farthing candle!" exclaimed Woodbine.

"You may depreciate yourself, but I cannot."

"I am very well satisfied with my command."

"Perhaps you are, but I am not. I shall not be satisfied till you are in the position to which your present rank, concealed for months before you accepted your commission, entitles you. General Buell is still engaged in organizing the Army of the Ohio; and I am not yet prepared to state

what your command will be, though I think I know where you are most needed. By the way, you have made a pet of that squadron of Kentucky cavalry which came into the service with a local name."

"The Riverlawn Cavalry, after the name of the plantation owned by the major in command," replied Woodbine, manifesting more interest than he had before displayed. "That squadron has been busily employed since the command was mustered in. They have nearly cleaned out the guerillas and foragers in this part of the State, and saved a vast amount of property from being carried over to the enemy."

"I know something about this squadron," added Thomas. "A portion of it under the command of a smart young fellow saved a long train of supplies the enemy needed even more than we did."

"That young fellow came up to see you yesterday as my messenger."

"Lieutenant Lyons! Was he the one?"

"He was; I have frequently commended him in my reports. Though he did not make him-

self conspicuous in the fights with the steamers, he did more than any other single person to bring about the capture and destruction of the enemy's river craft. He is only eighteen, but he is a veteran in his judgment."

"He must be promoted," added Thomas.

"He was made a first lieutenant when he came upon my staff, and he had better not be promoted again so soon."

"Just as you say, Woodbine; but I will try to remember him."

"I have no doubt you will be reminded of him as soon as active operations are resumed."

"You may return to your command, but you must be prepared for a better position than you have now. I am in communication with General Buell, and I shall send you orders as soon as possible. It is now the first of February, and something will be done very soon."

"If I am to have a brigade, I only hope, though I do not ask it, that the Riverlawn Cavalry will be attached to it; and Batterson's battery is a very efficient one," added Woodbine with a smile.

"I shall do the best I can for you."

Then the subject of the two hundred prisoners that General Woodbine held at Barkville was considered. General Buell had already ordered them to be sent to the prison camp near Chicago as soon as it could be ascertained that the Louisville and Nashville Railroad was open to the Ohio.

"I mentioned Thornfield in my report; what shall be done with him?" asked General Woodbine.

"I should hardly regard him as a spy, and you may send him off with the other prisoners of war," replied the superior.

They talked all the forenoon, and then dined together, while Deck was cared for in the mess of the staff. General Thomas rode down to the river with his guest after the meal, and saw him embark for the return.

"I hope you will not be fired into by the guerillas who want that launch," said General Thomas, as the boat shoved off.

"The craft is an ironclad," replied General Woodbine, pointing to the screens that sheltered the cabin,

"They may have seen the launch coming up the river, and may be on the lookout for its return."

"We came up in the night, and they would not have been likely to see her."

"They are birds of the night, and I advise you to keep a sharp lookout," added General Thomas, as he waved his adieus to his friend.

"Have you been to dinner, all hands?" asked the general as the Hipsy moved down the river.

"We have, General, and are in good condition for anything," replied Milton, who had known the commander before he joined the Riverlawns.

It was about two o'clock in the afternoon when the launch got under way at the ford. For four hours she continued on her course without interruption; but just as it was beginning to grow dark, Corporal Tilford, who smoked his pipe in the bow most of the time, shouted that there was something like a boat in the middle of the stream.

Deck hastened forward to ascertain what the object was, taking his field-glass from its case

as he did so. He brought the instrument to bear upon the boat, if it was one, though it did not look like one to him as seen with the naked eye.

"Where are we now, Lieutenant?" inquired the general, joining him in the bow.

"Off Rock House, Seef said it was yesterday; just where we had the fight," replied Deck.

"Probably the same ruffians that wanted the launch yesterday want it to-day," added the commander. "Can you make out what the craft is?"

"It looks more like a large raft than a boat of any kind," replied the lieutenant after he had examined the object with the glass. "It is anchored in the middle of the river; and there is a flat alongside of it, with which it was probably towed out from the Tennessee shore. There is something on this end of the raft which I cannot make out yet. In the middle of the thing there is a breastwork of logs, and whatever men there may be on the raft are behind this wall of wood."

The Hipsy continued on her course, with the eyes of all hands fixed upon this obstruction to the passage of the boat, for which it had evidently been moored in its present position. But it was still half a mile distant; and the affair could not yet be clearly defined, though there was light enough for that purpose.

"I hardly expected any interruption to our voyage; though I know that the woods on the south side of the river are full of men, looking more for plunder than to serve the Confederacy," said the general after the lapse of several minutes.

"Now I make out the black thing I saw before, and I am satisfied it is an iron cannon, which the blockheads have placed on this end of the raft instead of behind the breastwork; but their stupidity makes it all the better for us," added Deck when he had made out the gun.

"We are hardly in condition to face artillery," suggested the commander. "But I leave you to manage the affair, Lieutenant Lyon. Perhaps you had better run back a mile or two, and wait till it is dark enough to pass it."

•

"I don't like the idea of running away from these bushwhackers," replied Deck, with a good deal of contempt in his tones. "If you leave the matter to me, I shall go ahead till I know more about the situation. We have no idea how many men there are behind that breastwork."

The Hipsy went ahead a few minutes longer, when the stillness of the evening hour was interrupted by a peal from the gun on the raft.

"Good!" exclaimed Deck, as the ball struck the water at least an eighth of a mile from the launch. "If that's the sort of gunners they have we may go on our way without minding them."

"They may do better next time," added the general quietly. "They have some way to discharge the gun from behind the logs. Besides, they did not aim the piece at all."

Possibly the ruffians were ashamed of their bad practice with the big gun, and they opened upon the launch with muskets; but with these they did no better, and not more than half a dozen shots were fired, all of which fell short of

the boat. They soon fired again, and this time only six discharges could be counted.

"It is the same gang that attacked the launch yesterday, or rather what there are left of them," was the deduction Deck drew from the facts. "Now, General Woodbine, if you will oblige me by taking a seat in the cabin, I will soon make an end of this business."

"Take a seat in the cabin!" exclaimed the commander, laughing. "In the iron-clad cabin! Do you think I am a poltroon to run away in the face of the enemy? You ought to know me better, Lieutenant!"

"A general officer is not expected to expose himself unnecessarily in a battle, General; besides, your life is of more importance than those of all the rest us," replied Deck very decidedly; but he could not induce the commander to accept his advice.

The lieutenant called all hands except Seef to the bow of the boat, with their carbines and revolvers.

"Hurry her up, Corporal Drye! Head her for the raft, Seef!" excitedly shouted Deck; and he

saw that his men in the bow were safely crouching on the bottom of the boat.

The enemy continued to fire their muskets, but they could not come out from their shelter to load the cannon again. Seef was protected from the bullets by the boiler, as was the engineer. The result of the orders given was to drive the bow of the Hipsy into the raft, where she penetrated far enough to hold her in position.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE RESULT OF THE FIGHT ON THE RAFT

THE ruffians behind the breastwork on the raft could not be seen from the Hipsy, where the men were concealing themselves below the gunwale; and even General Woodbine had been reasonable enough to go into the cabin, which was protected by the screens he had caused to be made for the purpose. It was useless for the troopers to fire their carbines, and Lieutenant Lyon did not order them to do so.

“Have your sabres in hand, and your revolvers ready to use with the left hand,” said Deck, as the launch approached the raft. “Leap on the raft, and then over the breastwork!”

“We will be there!” replied Milton.

Corporal Drye, who had the engine, had placed his sabre within reach, and his revolver in the left of his belt; for he heard the order of the lieutenant. Deck had looked over the gunwale,

and had obtained some idea of the construction of the raft. It consisted of several logs placed lengthwise upon a number of shorter ones. The ruffians had evidently depended upon the iron cannon to do their work for them, and had not taken into account the frailty of the craft upon which they made the venture.

If the raft had been well constructed and the defence well managed, it would have been a formidable adversary for the Hipsy; but the lieutenant could not help wondering at the amazing stupidity of the ruffians in placing the gun where they could not use it after the first shot without exposing themselves to the carbines of the cavalrymen. They probably relied upon the iron cannon to do all the work for them at a single discharge, without considering that they were not gunners. If the shot from the ancient piece had struck the hull of the launch, it might have accomplished all they expected of it; but it had come nowhere near the boat.

Corporal Drye had driven the Hipsy at full speed; and she had inserted her sharp bow between a couple of the long logs, and spread them

far apart, so that she went a third of her length into the frail structure. The engineer stopped the engine, and opened the safety-valve when she had gone as far as she could, and then seized his sabre.

“Now board her!” cried Deck, as he contrived by stepping from a box upon the rail, and then upon the deranged logs, to be the first one on the raft.

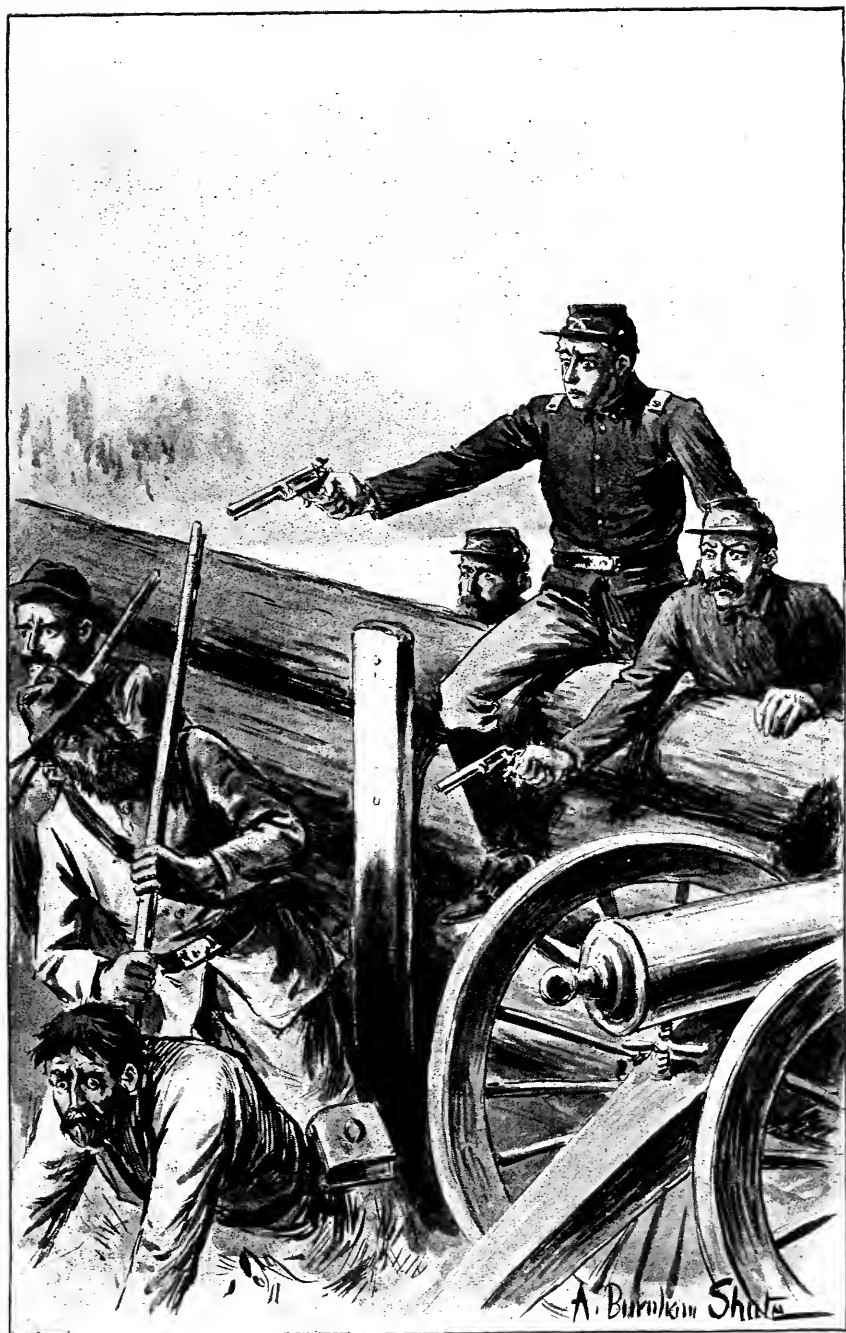
The ruffians had just discharged their muskets as the Hipsy came within twenty feet of the breastwork; but the men were not seen, and the shots were wasted, as all the others had been. The ruffians were reloading their muskets when the launch struck the raft. With his injured arm Deck could not climb over the breast of logs as his men did; but he heard the clash of the sabres and the reports of the revolvers.

Looking for a way to place himself on the other side of the log fence, he sheathed his sabre, and found a point at the end of the defence to work his body around it, though his disabled arm had nearly caused him to fall overboard. But the fight was nearly finished when

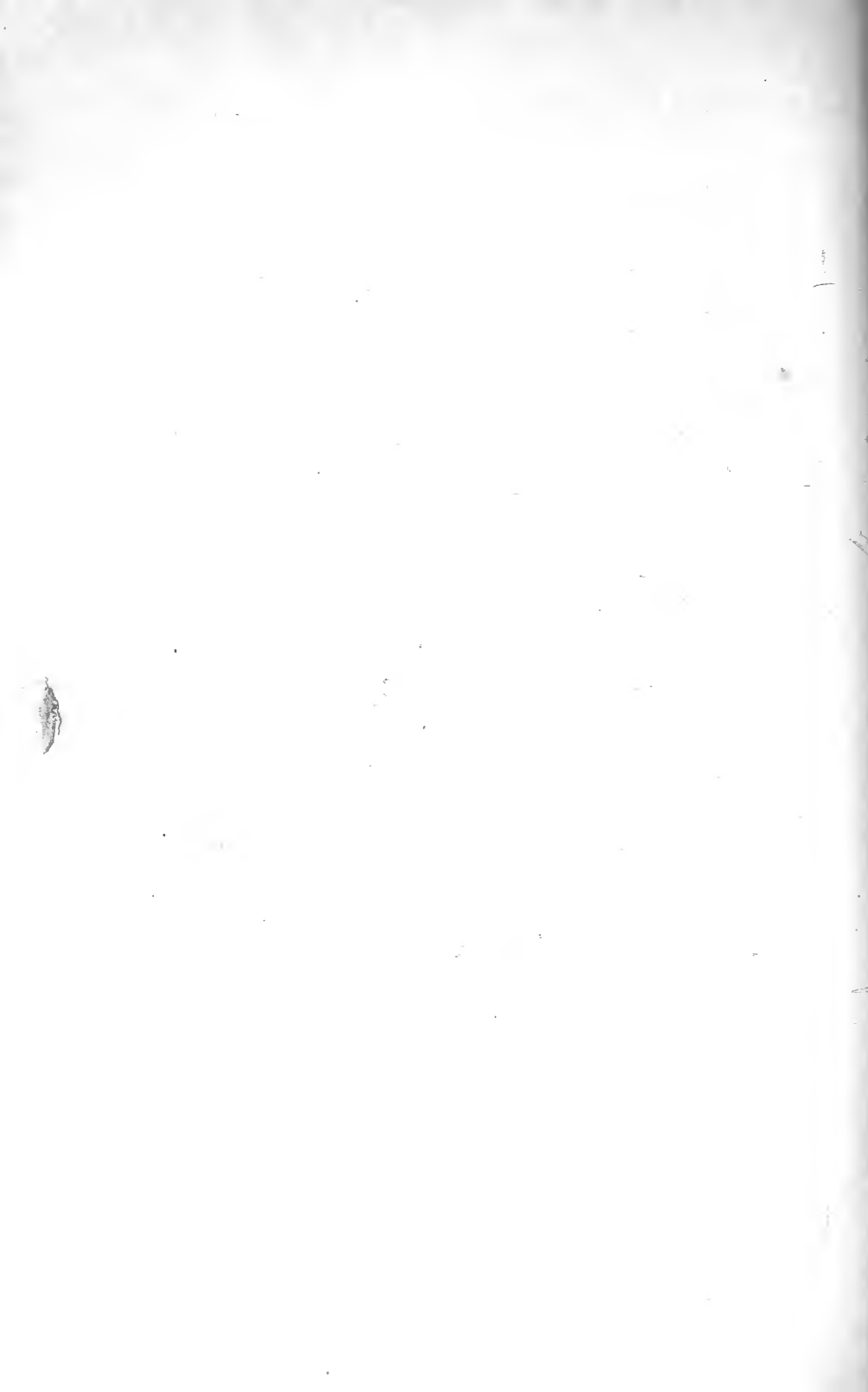
he reached the scene of the encounter. He had an opportunity to strike a single blow at one of the ruffians that came at him with a clubbed musket, and dropped him on a couple of others who had fallen.

General Woodbine left the cabin as soon as he heard the order to board, and appeared on the raft with his revolver in his hand, while Deck was working around the end of the breastwork; but he was too late to use his weapon, and did not understand the plan of the lieutenant. The fight behind the logs had lasted hardly more than a minute after the combatants came to close quarters; for the ruffians were practically powerless against the sabres in the hands of the well-trained troopers.

As soon as Deck had disposed of the only one of them that confronted him, he looked about him. Not one of the enemy was on his feet. In the faces of the dead and wounded he recognized some of the men whom they had seen the day before, and found that he had correctly estimated the number from the shots they had fired. He was just beginning to work his way



“The fight behind the logs lasted hardly more than a minute.”



back around the breastwork when Corporal Milton, calling for the assistance of his companions, tumbled the logs down; and he walked over a cleared space made for him, for half the material had been thrown into the river.

"You have done your work with desperate haste, Lieutenant," said the commander, as they met at the side of the iron gun.

"We had no time to dawdle over the matter," replied Deck, as he wiped his sabre with a paper which had doubtless been brought off for wadding for the gun. "In a case like this discipline wins the day, and enables us to do our work quickly."

"I had no idea that the affair would be so soon over," added the general. "What is the condition of the enemy?"

"They are in no condition at all; for two of them, I judge, are dead, and the other four are wounded and disabled," replied Deck. "Milton, just bouse that iron gun into the river," he added, as he saw the men gathered near him. "That piece shall not be used again against the soldiers of the Union."

The troopers rolled the naval carriage on which the gun was mounted to the edge of the raft, and dumped it into the water with a tremendous splash. The lieutenant then directed the men to shove the Hipsy out of the aperture she had made in the logs, which was not very easily done, for she had wedged herself very tightly into her position. But with some poles they found on the raft, it was pried out, and brought alongside.

"What next?" queried the general, with a smile that could hardly be discerned in the gathering gloom of the hour, for he seemed to be pleased with something.

"I think I have completed the work you gave me to do when you directed me to manage this affair, and I am ready for further orders," answered Deck, saluting the commander from the force of habit.

"You may keep on managing till we are alongside the Harbinger," returned the general.

His first order was for his men to convey the four wounded ruffians to the waist of the launch; but the commander declared that he

should not use the cabin any more, and that he put them in it, which was done. Deck then found a couple of rocks which had been used to block a log on the raft behind the gun-carriage, and then ordered Corporal Drye, who was more of a sailor than any of the rest of them, to make them fast to the bodies of the dead, and cast them into the river.

"We can't spend the time to take them on shore and bury them," he said to the commander, as he gave the order.

"In ordinary times it would not be allowable to throw the dead into the river; but you will moor them on the bottom, where they can do no harm," replied the general, as he went on board of the launch, and seated himself in the standing-room.

"Have you a hatchet, Seef?" asked Deck, as he followed the general officer.

"I have a shingling-hatchet, Mars'r," replied the contraband, as he brought it from the waist.

The boat was then swung round till it was beside the forward end of the raft, when Deck handed the hatchet to Milton, and told him to

chop off the cable of the floating fort. It was done, and the current started it down the river.

"What's that for, Lieutenant?" asked the commander.

"So that we need not run over the raft if we should happen to come up the river again in the Harbinger or the Hipsy," replied Deck, as he seated himself by the side of the general.

"You are very thoughtful for a young man," added the commander.

By eight o'clock the launch was alongside the Harbinger, on whose forecastle a lantern was hung up, while the general's escort was on the beach; for since the lieutenant's cap had received a bullet through it, it was not considered prudent for officers to go about the town in the evening unattended.

Lieutenant Knox saluted the general as the boat came alongside the steamer, and was ordered to send eight of his men on board of the Hipsy. When they came, the four wounded ruffians were moved to the deck of the steamer, and Knox was directed to send them to the prisoners' hospital.

“You have had a scrimmage, Lieutenant?” said Life, as he assisted Deck to mount to the deck.

“A little skirmish,” replied the lieutenant, still careful about the Kentuckian’s English. “But I have not time to tell you about it now.”

The general directed Knox to send a sergeant with the wounded ruffians, with an explanation to Dr. Farnwright that the men had been wounded in an attack upon the Hipsy up the river. The horses of the commander and the lieutenant were on the beach, and they mounted at once; and by this time Deck had practised enough to be able to mount his steed readily on the wrong side, and Ceph was not disposed to do as a cow will sometimes when milked on what would be the proper side to mount a horse, — kick the milker over.

They were expected at headquarters; and supper was all ready for them, though they were rather late. The negro cook gave them very nice fried chicken and white corncake, and they were in excellent condition to enjoy the meal. Lieutenant Herndon was at the table; and Deck

told him about the encounter with the raft, and the result of the affair. Later in the evening the surgeon called to see his patient, afraid that he might have been injured in the affair the sergeant reported to him.

“One of those wounded fellows died before he reached the hospital, and another is not likely to live till morning, for both of them were disabled by sabre-thrusts in the chest,” reported the doctor. “Let me see your arm, Lieutenant Lyon.”

“It is all right, Doctor; for I have been as careful of it as though I had been in my room all day,” replied Deck, as he led the way to his chamber in the rear of the office.

The splint had prevented the officer from bending his arm or twisting it; and the surgeon declared that it was a lovely wound, healthy, and progressing rapidly. He was anxious about some of his worst cases, and hastened back to the hospital. Deck slept soundly that night after the excitement of the day. The next morning he felt that his strength had been entirely restored; and he was better than he had been before since

he received his wound, which had weakened him by the loss of so much of his young blood.

No more foraging steamers came up the river, for the fate of the Harbinger and the New Moon had been made known as far down the river as Nashville. It was therefore a quiet time for the four companies stationed at Barkville; and the farmers and planters in the country around were glad to have them there, for guerillas and foragers from both sides of the river deemed it prudent to keep their distance from the counties nearest to the camp.

A few days after the return of General Woodbine from his visit to General Thomas, events began to move more rapidly. The railroads and the telegraphs, which are among the mightiest engines of modern warfare, had been repaired, and restored to the use of the army in all portions of the State not actually occupied by the enemy, which comprised not more than one-tenth of its territory at that time.

“We are on the eve of important events,” said the general, seated in his office with his two aids. “You will not be compelled to rust in inactivity much longer.”

"Speed the time!" exclaimed Herndon, who was more impatient than his fellow-officer on the staff; but he had taken no part in the steamer work which had occupied the attention of the latter a small portion of the time, and he was not nursing a wound.

"I have the idea, from what little I can see in the horizon, that the situation in this part of the country will be essentially changed within a month," added the general. "I have been expecting that we should be ordered to join an army for the conquest of East Tennessee, where the people are loyal to a considerable extent, if the Union sentiment is not in the majority."

"Telegram, sir!" said Finch, entering the office before the commander could finish what he had to say.

It was an order from General Thomas to send the two hundred prisoners, more or less, to Glasgow, under proper escort, and ship them there for Louisville. Orders were sent at once to Major Lyon to have his squadron in the town square, at seven the next morning, ready for a long march and two days' absence from the camp.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE BEGINNING OF THE GREAT MOVEMENT

A BRANCH of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad had been extended into Barren County as far as Glasgow, thirty miles from Barkville; and this was the route by which the prisoners were to be sent. The Riverlawn squadron were in the square at the appointed hour, and the horses were in excellent condition after the vacation. Perhaps the Confederates were glad of a change; though probably they were not, for they had been well fed, and lodged in some disused tobacco factories.

They were formed in the square, and with about two hundred mounted troopers around them they were entirely tractable, and made no complaint; but the writer has heard Confederate soldiers who had been confined at the prison-camp to which these men were to be sent, complain bitterly of the food served out to them.

Upon inquiry the objectionable articles of diet proved to be salt fish and baked beans.

Southerners were not accustomed to such food, which are staple articles in the bill of fare of prison-camps and all large gatherings in the North; but the prisoners of Andersonville would have fared royally on an abundant diet of this description. General Woodbine was present to witness the departure. Thornfield and other civilians who had been engaged in the raid were brought out, and placed in the ranks. The planter hailed the general as he rode near him, and without leaving his place began to voice his complaint in a loud tone.

"General Woodbine, I protest against being sent North as a prisoner of war!" shouted he.

"That's all right; you can protest as much as you please if that does you any good, but don't make too much noise about it, or the sergeant will feel obliged to put a gag in your mouth," replied the commander very pleasantly.

"I am not a soldier, but a civilian!" continued the planter, stepping out of the ranks, and approaching the general.

“The government has a crowd of civilians in Fort Lafayette near New York. Mr. Thornfield, I am disposed to extend to you any consideration within the line of my duty,” the commander continued more seriously. “In your steam-launch you conveyed information to the enemy down the river that a considerable quantity of supplies had arrived, and had been stored in this place for the use of my command, in consequence of which a steamer was sent here armed and manned for the purpose of capturing them. Not only this, but you made signals to assist the Harbinger in approaching the town. I was disposed to regard you as spy, but my superior officer took a different view of the matter; and you may thank him that you escaped a drum-head court-martial, which would doubtless have condemned you to be hung or shot. I don’t care to hear anything more from you, for the facts are patent to us all. If you think as a citizen of Kentucky you have the right to assist the enemy in fighting the battles of the Confederacy, I can only add that you are very much mistaken,” said the general, as he rode away from the spot; and a sergeant drove Thornfield back to his place.

The column started on the march with a file of Riverlawns on each side of the prisoners, the great body of them being in the front and rear. Seef, who had been absent over two days from the plantation of his master, had slept on board of the Hipsy, and came up to the square in the morning after he had been waked from his slumbers by the movements of the troop; but when he saw the prisoners paraded in the square, he was careful to keep out of sight of his master.

"What are they going to do with Mars'r Thornfield, Mars'r Lieutenant?" he asked when he discovered Deck, who had come rather late to witness the leaving of the prisoners.

"He is to be sent away with the rest of them," replied the officer.

"Where are they going, Mars'r?" inquired the contraband, looking very sad; for there could be no doubt that he was very much attached to his owner.

"They will be sent to a prison-camp near Chicago."

"May I speak to him before he goes, Mars'r?" he asked.

“Yes ; ” and Deck rode with him to the column, and the sergeant permitted the prisoner to walk between the platoons of the company with his servant.

Mr. Thornfield could not contain the indignation he felt at what he insisted upon calling the unjust treatment to which he was subjected ; and he vented it very earnestly to his servant, till the sergeant advised him to speak in a lower tone. Seef’s master was not aware that his overseer had been in the service of the Federals for two days, or it might have changed the course of his remarks.

The procession departed ; and Seef walked all the way with it to Paces, on the Marrow Bone Road. The planter tried to obtain permission to visit his family under guard before he was hurried away, but it could not be granted without halting the column and delaying the march ; but the faithful Seef ran ahead for more than a mile, as the planter’s house was near the road, and had the family at a point where they could see him.

Major Lyon saw the wife and children as he

rode by them, and understood that they were the family of the prisoner; and a few minutes later he ordered a halt for rest, which enabled the last adieus to be spoken. It was an affecting scene, and the soldiers of both armies looked on in respectful silence. Fifteen minutes were given to them, and then the column resumed the march. Seef went home with his mistress and the children; and they had so much to think of that he was not asked where he had been the last two days.

The Riverlawns marched to Glasgow the first day, though it was a long march for the prisoners, and returned the next day. The surgeon reported that day that the patient who had been wounded on the raft had died, and that all the rest of the occupants of the hospital were doing well. Only three days later a telegram came from General Thomas, then in command of the first division of the Army of the Ohio: "Move your entire force to Somerset, by road or river."

General Woodbine had expected an order to move very soon; but he believed it would be to Munfordville, or some other point to the north.

It was evident that the army was concentrating for a movement, though in what direction he could form no idea; but he did not lose a moment in preparing to obey the order. All the steamboat men in the force were in demand; and Deck was required to see that the Harbinger was put in order for the trip, and that the supplies in store in the town were loaded into her.

The service of the men who had been employed on Green River made them valuable assistants at this time. Drye and Beckland were appointed engineers, and were required to put the engines in good order. The people of the town assisted all they could, but they could not find a pilot for the river up to the Monticello Ford; for those who had been employed on the Harbinger and New Moon were believed to be Secessionists, and had been sent North with the other prisoners.

General Woodbine gave the order for the movement to begin the next morning at nine o'clock. The cavalry companies had been kept full, and there were always applicants for enlistment waiting to get into these commands.

There were about four hundred men, besides the usual number of camp retainers; and this number with their horses, the light battery with its guns and caissons, required a large amount of space; and Lieutenant Lyon decided, as soon as he considered the matter, that the Harbinger could not carry them all at a single trip, and he reported accordingly to the commander.

"Make two trips of it, then, Lieutenant," promptly replied the general. "Let the Riverlawn Cavalry be sent up by the first boat, and the Marions and the battery by the second."

"This will make some delay," suggested Deck.

"I was not ordered to make any special haste, though I make it a business to execute all my orders promptly," replied the general. "But I do not see that the delay can be prevented."

"Perhaps it can, General," suggested the staff-officer.

"In what manner?" asked the commander curiously, as he looked with interest into the face of his young companion, who had often proved himself to be fertile in expedients.

"It is now hardly ten o'clock in the fore-

noon," said Deck, consulting his watch. "If you give Major Lyon the order to break camp at once, and march to the levee, the first boat can leave by one o'clock, if not sooner, and reach the ford early in the evening. The Harbinger can return in the night, and be ready for the next trip to-morrow morning."

"Lieutenant Herndon!" called the commander.

"He is in his room, General," replied Finch, who was in the hall.

"Call him."

He appeared a minute later.

"Carry my order to Major Lyon at the camp to break camp immediately, move the wagon-train to the levee, and march there with his squadron of Riverlawns. The Marions and the battery will remain where they are," said the general hastily; and the staff-officer saw that he was in a hurry.

Herndon went out of the house, mounted his horse, which was at the door, and galloped up the road outside of the long hill. The squadron had been trained to celerity in its movements, and the assembly was vigorously sounded a mo-

ment after the arrival of the lieutenant. The major did not pause to ask any questions—he never did; and Herndon could not have answered them if he had, for he had been wondering himself what was going on.

Deck mounted his horse, and hastened to the steamer to see that she was ready for immediate service. The engineers were on board; and Sergeant Sluder had been appointed pilot, with the assistance of Seef, who was familiar with the river, though he had sailed only the launch upon its waters, and she was of much lighter draft than the Harbinger.

Not an hour had elapsed before the wagon-train was on the levee, each drawn by eight mules; for these animals had been exceedingly abundant after General Crittenden had abandoned hundreds of them at Beechwood Camp. Lieutenant Knox superintended the embarkation of the wagons, and had extended lines where the troopers' horses were to be picketed on the deck. He had hardly disposed of them before the squadron arrived.

The commander came with them, to satisfy

himself that his orders had been faithfully executed. As soon as it was noised over the town that a movement of the troops was in progress, about all the inhabitants gathered on the levee. Of course they asked a great many questions of the cavalrymen as they were waiting to go on board of the steamer; but they were as little informed as the people themselves. The men marched up the gang-plank by fours, picketed their horses, and were then sent up to the saloon.

Deck had directed Knox to have dinner cooked for the men on board, to avoid delay. The negro cooks, waiters, and firemen had remained on duty; for they had nowhere to go, and were far away from their homes, — those who had them “down in Tennessee.” The troops had saved the town from being looted by the enemy, and they had the kindest feeling towards them. They brought a great quantity of cake, and such other eatables as they happened to have on hand; and the men were likely to live in clover on their short voyage.

“You must go with them, Lieutenant Lyon,”

said the commander, when all was ready for the departure of the Harbinger, and a hundred things had been done which could not be mentioned.

Deck was ready to obey the order, and only asked if he should return in the boat, which he was required to do, and was told that he could sleep all the afternoon and all night if he was so minded.

"Then you are all going to leave us, General Woodbine," said the chairman of the town council, putting in a late appearance.

"Not all to-day, but the rest will leave to-morrow," answered the commander. "We are under orders to march; but I am glad we have been able to save your town and its vicinity from what might have been a very ugly raid."

"We are sorry to have you go, for you have been the strong arm of the nation to us," added the chairman, as the general made a signal to Deck, who was on the hurricane deck near the pilot-house.

"Let her slide, Sergeant Sluder!" called the lieutenant. "Back out from the levee, and head her up the river!"

Seef came to the town every day to learn the news for his mistress ; and Deck had pressed him into the service again, though he was willing enough to go with the steamer. Lieutenant Lyon was in command of the Harbinger ; and before the boat had backed five rods there was a cry on shore, and he saw the general waving his cap energetically at him.

“Stop her, Sluder!” shouted Deck to the pilot.

CHAPTER XXV

THE FIGHT AT CUFFY'S FERRY

"WHAT is the matter, Sergeant Sluder?" asked Lieutenant Lyon, as he entered the pilot-house.

"I saw a stir in the crowd on shore, but I could not make out what it meant," replied the sergeant. "I see there is a flat coming off from the shore."

Deck went to the edge of the deck, and discovered the boat, which contained no less a personage than the chairman of the town council, and which was paddled by a negro. He hastened to the lower deck to receive the distinguished gentleman, who came alongside a moment later.

"General Woodbine requested me to send this telegram off to you, and I have brought it myself," said the chairman, handing up an envelope. "It was addressed to me, and you can see that it is important."

Deck took the despatch from its cover, and read it. It was very brief, like most messages that went by wire: "Enemy crossing river at Cuffy's Ferry." It was signed "Hickman." Deck knew Colonel Hickman of Grove Hill, and concluded at once that it was not a trick of the enemy. If it had been, the writer would have been likely to send the force in the other direction.

"This was plainly intended to be given to the general," suggested the lieutenant, when he had read the message.

"I have shown it to him, as I said, and he asked me to send it off to you; and he added that you would know what to do with it," answered the chairman.

"All right; tell him, if you please, that I consider that last remark from him equivalent to an order," added Deck.

He looked towards the shore, and discovered the commander seated upon his horse on the levee. He had drawn his sword, not for action, but simply to use as a pointer; and he flourished it vigorously in the direction of up the river.

This was enough for the young officer; and he interpreted the signal as a command to hurry up the stream on his way to Cuffy's Ferry, for the old negro's occupation had given this name to the locality.

"Back her, Sergeant Sluder!" shouted Deck at the top of his lungs; for he was at a considerable distance from the pilot-house.

The engine-bells struck, the wheels began to turn back in obedience to the order, and Deck felt very much like the captain of a steamboat just then. The officers of the Riverlawn battalion were all on board of the Harbinger. The major and the two captains, and even the two first lieutenants, ranked him, or were his superiors; but Deck was a staff-officer, with direct orders from the general in command, and therefore could assume the superiority if necessary.

For the first time since he entered the service, he was the acting superior of his father and his former captain; but he did not feel at home in this position, and he promptly decided not to assume command over his father, for it was absolutely repugnant for him to give an order to him.

"Head her up the river, Sergeant Sluder!" he shouted to the pilot.

The steamer came about, and proceeded in the direction indicated; and Deck felt then just as though his occupation was gone, for he desired to give up the command to his superior in rank. Lieutenant Knox was on the forecastle, and had observed the movements of Deck with interest. He did not know the contents of the envelope which had been delivered to him; and, according to his habit, he asked no questions.

"Lieutenant Lyon, on the staff, I am in doubt," said he, saluting the young officer.

"What's the matter now, Life?" inquired Deck.

"The general placed me in command of this boat while she was lying at the levee; but I am in doubt whether I have anything more to do with her or not," said the tall Kentuckian, as he looked down upon his military superior, who was greatly his physical inferior.

"You are in the same box with me, Life; but don't cry about it," replied Deck, treating him with his usual familiarity when they were

off duty. "I should say that, like mine, your occupation is gone; and I advise you to report to Captain Gordon for duty, with the men who were under your command. I shall do the same to my father. I did not look for any trouble during the trip before we left the levee, or I should have asked the general for more explicit orders;" and Deck led the way up the stairs to the saloon, where his father and the rest of the officers had gone. He found the commander of the battalion near the stern, and saluted him precisely as though they had not been father and son.

"Why was the boat stopped just now, Lieutenant?" inquired the major; and on duty he treated his son just as though he had been some other person's son.

"I have come up to see you on account of that stoppage, which was to enable the chairman of the town council to deliver a message to me," answered Deck.

"And what was the message?"

"Here it is," replied the son, handing his father the envelope.

Major Lyon read the despatch, and handed it back to the lieutenant.

"It was plainly intended for you, Major," returned Deck, declining to receive it. "It appears that there is to be a fight up the river; and as you are in command of the squadron, it was evidently intended for you."

"Are you sure of that, Lieutenant?" asked the major.

"As you are in command of all the troops on board, of course it was intended for you," replied the lieutenant in a matter-of-fact tone and manner. "The message indicates that a raid from the Tennessee side of the river is crossing at the point mentioned. I think the general, whom I saw on the levee, and who made signals when he saw me on the forecastle, meant that the boat was to proceed up the river; and I repeated the order to Sergeant Sluder, who is acting as pilot."

"The signal was made to you?" queried the major.

"I took it as made to the boat, or at least for her to start up the river. — Is this your state-

room, father?" indicating the one at the door of which the major stood.

"The waiter assigned it to me."

Deck went into it, and his father followed him; for the young man did not care to have others hear what passed between them.

"The general has employed you, Dexter, in some important positions, and I have been very glad to find that he regarded you as competent to fill them," said the major, as he seated himself on a stool. "The question with me now is whether he did not intend that you, as his staff-officer and representative present, should command on this steamer. I am entirely willing that you should do so."

"I have no order to do so; I see no necessity for me to do so, and I shall not do so," replied Deck firmly.

"Of course, if you had any orders to give, you would give them to me," added the father.

"It does not seem to me that I could give my father an order, unless in an extreme emergency," said Deck, shaking his head to emphasize his remark.

“General Woodbine told me himself that you commanded the little force on the Hipsy, and that he did not interfere with you in the fight with the raft. If you could command in the presence of the general, you can do so in mine,” said the major with a smile.

“That was a picayune affair, and it was beneath the dignity of a general officer to command a party of half a dozen men,” said Deck lightly. “But, father, without meddling with the command of the battalion, I will take charge of the steamer.”

“Very well, my son; arrange it to suit yourself. If the enemy were crossing the river when the message was sent, probably they are gone inland long before we can get to the ferry; and if there is any fight, it is to be on shore.”

“We shall not get to the ferry for three hours yet. I think our friend Colonel Halliburn, who is in command of the Home Guard at Millersville, with the riflemen who did such good service at the Battle of Mill Springs, will be there, and I doubt if we have much to do.”

The question was settled to the satisfaction

of both father and son, and there was nothing more to do about it. The question of rank is a delicate matter with military officers, and Deck was especially sensitive in regard to his relations with his father; and he would have yielded to him if his right to command had been even more clear than it was.

He went to the pilot-house, and found Seef at the wheel with Sergeant Sluder; and the Harbinger was going along as well, and apparently as safely, as though she had a licensed pilot at the wheel. Dinner was served as soon as it was ready, and the officers had the table in the ladies' cabin. The cooks did not seem to have minded the change of masters, and had done their duty faithfully. It was a plain meal, but better than the soldiers usually had in camp.

For about three hours the steamer went along without impediment, when a boat containing a single person was discovered ahead. As it came nearer, Deck, who had returned to the pilot-house, recognized it as the one in which he and Sergeant Fronklyn had escaped from the works at Beech Grove, and which he had given to

Cuffy the ferryman; and he had no doubt the old negro was in it. Many of the men had gone to the fore-castle to smoke their pipes, and among them he saw his companion in the events at the ferry and Grove Hill.

Deck ordered the pilot to slow down, and then called to Fronklyn to hail the boat, and take the ferryman and his boat on board, which was all done with the assistance of the troopers on the main deck. The sergeant was directed to bring the old negro to the hurricane deck, and presently he appeared at the door of the pilot-house.

“Bress de Lo’d, Mars’r Leftenant! is that you?” exclaimed Cuffy, as Deck took his hand. “You war made a gin’al on de field out here, and I done tink” —

“Not a general, Cuffy; but never mind all that,” interposed the lieutenant. “Have the enemy come across the river at your ferry?”

“Yes, Mars’r; they done brung six flats down to de ribber, and den com’d ober. Den dey done march up de Jamestown road, and turn up de hill to Cun’l Hickman’s place. Cuffy was

skeered out of his nineteen senses. He take to his boat, and 'scape down de ribber. I hear de big guns up dar, and don't know notin' more. But hear 'em firin' halb an hour ago; and I reckon de Hum G'ads is after 'em."

From this imperfect account, Deck, who was familiar with the locality, understood the situation better than the negro. Colonel Hickman had two field-pieces on his place; and doubtless he had used them with good effect, and driven off the marauders. Probably his sons had followed them, and called out Colonel Halliburn's Home Guard, who had engaged the guerillas, as Deck judged that they must be.

The Harbinger continued on her course, and soon came in sight of the great bend where the ferry was located. Deck found his father and Lieutenant Knox on the forecastle when he went down. They had already smelled fight in the distance, and Life found a man who had served in an artillery company in the militia. The two field-pieces brought up on the steamer were still on board, with the caisson of ammunition. Both of them had been loaded, and placed in position.

Major Lyon had ordered his command to resume their arms, and they were all ready. Everything had been arranged so that the horses could be conveniently landed if it should be necessary to pursue the enemy. At the landing they saw the six flats, each of which could carry eight persons or more, huddled together in a heap. As the boat rounded the bend, the combatants, whose firing had been heard for some minutes, came in sight. The Home Guard were seen on one side of the road through the grove, and the ruffians on the other; and the battle in this position appeared to have just begun.

"Now is our time, Major," said Deck to his father. "They are placed just right for us."

The point was instantly perceived by the commander; and he ordered Knox to fire the big guns, which had been loaded with canister. One of the guns was discharged; and it made a tremendous racket, as though the amateur gunner had used more powder than was necessary.

CHAPTER XXVI

CAPTAIN DEXTER LYON OF THE STAFF

THE second field-piece was discharged as soon as the smoke of the first had cleared away enough to enable the major to see the effect of the first. The canister overtook the retreating foe, more of them fell, and the rest fled to the shelter of a knoll at the side of the Jamestown road. The Home Guards came out from their concealment at the grove avenue. The men seemed to have some fear that they might be fired upon; and a man ran with all his might towards the Harbinger, which was holding her own against the current.

“That affair seems to be over so far as we are concerned,” said the major, as he viewed the shore. “The defenders of the place appear to have as many men as the enemy, and can take care of themselves.”

"But the enemy may double on them, and reach their boats," suggested Captain Gordon.

"Destroy the boats, then," added Major Lyon.

The captain spoke to Knox; and the two guns were loaded with solid shot, and fired into the nest of flats. They made crashing work with them, but they did not sufficiently break them up to satisfy the major, and he sent Cuffy's boat with four men in it, armed with axes; and they were smashing them with all the haste they could command when the enemy, who had led the guards on a wild goose-chase, appeared running with all their speed towards the landing-place.

Captain Gordon's company were on the fore-castle, while Captain Truman's were on the boiler-deck and near it in the saloon. Both of them were ordered to use their carbines, and they were promptly discharged in two volleys. The effect was to check the guerillas, and cause them to retreat again. But the guards were coming by the shortest way, and at once gave chase to them.

By this time there was nothing but the wreck of the flats left; and they were pushed out into

the stream, and were carried away by the current. The man who was running to the shore was taken into the boat used by the axemen. He was an old man with white hair, and Deck recognized in him Colonel Hickman when he came nearer. He was not as old as he might have been, and he leaped upon the deck like an able-bodied Kentuckian. He saw Deck, and rushed to him with both hands extended.

"I am very glad to see you again, my young friend!" exclaimed the colonel, as he seized both of the lieutenant's hands. "You have come to us again in our time of need, though the situation is not so bad as it was when you were here last. I ran to the shore to beg you not to fire upon our men."

"We understood the situation, and should not have done so without any warning," replied Deck.

"I think we could have beaten them off if you had not come to our assistance," added the colonel, "though we are none the less obliged to you for your good service."

"Do you think you can handle the enemy

now, Colonel Hickman?" asked Major Lyon, as he presented his hand to the planter. "We are ordered up the river, and I do not wish to delay any longer than is necessary."

"I am sure we can take care of the guerillas now, and we will have them under guard as prisoners very soon," answered the colonel. "I discovered the approach of the enemy before they were half across the river, for I was walking down the avenue at the time. I sent two of my negroes over to Millersville, and the Home Guards came over at once. We need not detain you any longer. Cuffy will set me ashore in his boat; and I am very grateful to you for what you have done. I read all about your affairs with the steamers down below, and it was fortunate you were at Barkville."

The colonel shook hands with all the officers whose acquaintance he had made after the guerilla attack upon his mansion, when the enemy were finally defeated and captured by the River-lawns. Cuffy rowed him ashore, and Deck gave the order for the boat to proceed on her way up the river. Long as it has taken to report the

brief action, the Harbinger had not been detained over half an hour.

It was quite dark when the boat arrived at the Monticello Ford, though it was only half-past seven. The general had telegraphed when the squadron would probably arrive; and Lieutenant Blood was at the landing to receive them, and conduct them to the camp. He gave Deck a warm welcome, and evidently liked him. The major gave orders for the debarkation of the horses, and the men soon followed them. It required a longer time to get the wagon-train on shore, and it was half-past nine when the Harbinger was ready to start on her return. The water was rather shoal near the ford, and the steamer had to back down stream some distance before she could come about.

The officers and men had taken their supper at six o'clock; and as soon as the steamer was fairly on her course, Deck felt very much like a steamboat captain. Then he made a visit to the pilot-house. He found the two pilots wide awake; but the lieutenant thought they were having the worst of it, with the engineers.

Wishing to be in good condition for the next morning, Deck "turned in" then, and slept like a log till the waiter called him, and said they were within a mile of Barkville.

It was half-past three in the morning; and a guard of twenty men belonging to Captain Battersen's battery were waiting for the Harbinger, to take charge of her the rest of the night. Deck left his bed, and saw that sentinels were posted in several places about the boat; for possibly there were Secessionists enough in the town and its vicinity to run away with her.

Three men from the battery were in possession of the Hipsy, and one of them was on guard all night. As soon as he had satisfied himself that everything was safe about the steamer, Deck went to bed again; and he was not called till nine in the morning, when he found General Woodbine standing at the side of his berth.

"Safely back?" said the commander. "The waiters say there was not much of an engagement at the Ferry, and none of our men were killed or wounded."

"We were not even fired into, and none of

us had a chance to get hurt," replied the lieutenant, rubbing his eyes, and then looking at his watch. "After nine o'clock! Why didn't somebody call me?"

"Because I ordered the waiters not to call you before," answered the general with a smile. "You are still a young man, and you need all the sleep you can get. You may get up now, and have your breakfast, for we are about 'ready to start.'"

"Are the Marions and the battery on board with their guns?" asked Deck, amazed to find he had slept so long, and had not been disturbed by the moving of the guns.

"All on board; and, as you are the commander of the steamer, we are waiting for you to start her," laughed the general.

Deck hastily dressed himself, and then went down to the forecastle. He found some of the town's people there, who were anxious to have a parting shake of the hand with all the commissioned officers. This ceremony was soon disposed of; the lieutenant went to the pilot-house, and gave the order to back the boat, and then

to come about. It was but a few minutes before she was again on her way to the Monticello Ford, and Deck went to the cabin for his breakfast.

The head waiter was exceedingly deferential to him, and brought him everything the kitchen afforded. He ate a very hearty meal, and then there was nothing more for him to do till the boat arrived at her destination. It was a beautiful day for the month of February; and he went on the hurricane deck to enjoy the mild air, which was unusually warm for the season, even in that latitude. He found General Woodbine there, who was disposed to walk with him; and they promenaded the deck for some time, talking over the war news of the East and the West.

"The North has been very much depressed since the battle of Bull Run, though it was nearly seven months ago," said the general.

"But the North has raised immense hosts of troops since; and the people seem as determined as ever to put down the rebellion, whatever it may cost in men and money," added Deck, who

had read a great deal more about the war than most young men of his age.

“Of course I don’t know anything about it, and there are no seers who can foretell what is going to happen; but my judgment is that all the loyal people of the country will have something to cheer and encourage them before many more weeks pass by,” added the commander.

The lieutenant thought the general knew more about what was coming than he was willing to admit; but he was afraid to ask any questions, and probably his companion would not have answered them if he had. The conversation was interrupted by the appearance of several other officers on the upper deck; but Deck kept up a heavy thinking all the time. It was evident enough that a general of the commander’s ability, and especially one who was an intimate friend of a commander of division, would not remain long as the chief of a force consisting of three companies of cavalry and a battery of light artillery.

Deck continued to walk for the want of something better to do; and he wondered if he should

retain his present position near the general, who had certainly appreciated him in the past, and had always been very kind to him. It was an interesting question to him, though he would not have been sorely afflicted if he had been sent back to his former company. In his previous trips up the river, he had had something to stir his blood; and he almost wished for something of the kind at the present time, for he wanted something to do to turn his thoughts into another direction.

Nothing came to disturb the quiet of the trip. Dinner was served at the usual time, and at about four in the afternoon the Harbinger arrived at the ford. Before dark the force had been landed, and conducted to the camp. For the next four days nothing was done which relieved the anxiety of Deck in regard to the immediate future. At that time came the news that Fort Henry, on the Tennessee River, had been captured, and that General Grant was moving on Fort Donelson on the Cumberland.

It was evident enough to Deck that if Fort Donelson was taken, the Confederate line of de-

fence must be moved farther south, for nothing would remain of it but Bowling Green. Commodore Foote's gunboats were pounding at the fort, but not with the same success as at Fort Henry. While news was coming occasionally, General Buell was organizing his army, and had already created six divisions, the first of which was under the command of Brigadier-General Thomas. General Woodbine had been unable to have a brigade in the division of his friend; but he was placed in command of three Kentucky regiments, and his brigade was completed by the addition of the three companies of cavalry and Batterson's light battery. This brigade was placed in the division of Brigadier-General William Nelson.

It was in General Woodbine's tent that this information was conveyed to Lieutenant Lyon. The latter had heard the name of General Nelson, but he knew next to nothing about him. He was to be in the division of this commander, and it was natural for him to desire to know something more about him.

“Who is our division commander, General?”

he asked. "I have read something about him in connection with affairs in the eastern part of the State, but I have about forgotten what little I did know."

"In the first place he is a Kentuckian, and I think he is about thirty-seven years old. He was in the navy formerly, and commanded a naval battery in the siege of Vera Cruz at the beginning of the Mexican War, and was afterwards on duty in the Mediterranean. He was several times promoted, and as a lieutenant-commander was sent West to command a gunboat on the Western rivers, especially on the Ohio."

"How does he happen to be in the army if he is a naval officer?" asked Deck, puzzled with his present position as a general officer in command of a division.

"He was detached from naval duty, and placed under the authority of the Secretary of War, who sent him to his native State to raise and organize troops, in which he was very successful. He organized Camp Dick-Robinson, and another in Mason County. He had several fights with the enemy in the eastern part of the State, and

has always been considered an able and brave officer."

"I shall probably never have anything to do with him, but I should like to know what sort of a man he is," added Deck.

"I am sorry to be obliged to say, in order to speak the truth, that he is a harsh and overbearing man. Perhaps I had better not say anything more about him; and I think that all you had better remember about him is that he is a brave and very able officer. But I have something more to say to you, Captain Lyon," added the general, as he took from his table a ponderous envelope, and presented it to him.

"You called me Captain Lyon!" exclaimed Deck in utter amazement.

"I meant it; read the paper in the envelope."

CHAPTER XXVII

THE LONG DELAY AT DUCK RIVER BRIDGE

LIKE his father, Deck thought he had advanced very rapidly for his age, and he had no more idea of becoming a captain than he had of being a major-general. He could scarcely believe the evidence of his own senses as he saw his name plainly written in the commission handed to him. He could not quite understand it. It was not more than a couple of months before that he had been promoted from second to first lieutenant.

He had thought that he might become a captain when he was twenty-one years old if the war lasted long enough ; but he had looked for no advancement sooner than that, though he had heard of captains in the army who were no older than he was, and of some who had been promoted to this rank who had seen less service than he had. The general left the tent while

he was reading his commission, and he had the time to think about it.

He could not help asking himself what he had done to merit this preferment. He had been in no regular battle recently. He had accidentally discovered the approach of the Harbinger; but he had not fought at all in the fight in the town, though he was willing to take upon himself some of the credit of the capture of the steamer. He had beaten off the ruffians when they attacked the Hipsy, and he had managed the affair with the raft. Perhaps he was in a degree indebted to the presence of the general on that occasion. He had been active in the launch at the engagement resulting in the destruction of the New Moon, and he had been able to make some rather important suggestions to General Woodbine at times.

But he was not quite willing to admit to himself that he had done enough to merit the promotion that had come to him. "Captain Lyon!" His name with this handle to it seemed to him to be bigger than Bunker Hill Monument, which he had seen on his way from New

Hampshire to Kentucky. So far as he knew, no other officer or private had been promoted; and of course he ascribed his good fortune solely to General Woodbine, who had made a favorite of him.

He was not disposed to quarrel with the honor that had been thrust upon him; for no such thought as being promoted had come to him since his advancement to the rank of first lieutenant. After all, it seemed to him only an honor; for he was to remain on the staff of the general, and his duties would be essentially the same as before. It was not as though he was to be placed at the head of a company in the field. The general believed that the nation was on the eve of great events, which to the new captain meant hard fighting; for the enemy were brave even to desperation.

If this prediction were realized, he would have the opportunity to win his promotion after he had obtained it, as he could hardly believe he had already done. He walked up and down in the tent, not a little nervous and excited in his new and novel situation. The army had had a

long rest, or at least that portion of it to which he belonged had, though the Riverlawn Cavalry had been kept busy most of the time since it had been mustered into the service.

The news of the surrender of Fort Donelson had come to Somerset, and it had been soon followed by the evacuation of Bowling Green by the enemy. General Mitchell had been advancing upon the place, and it was now in possession of his command. The Confederate army under General A. S. Johnston had been concentrated at Corinth, just over the boundary of Tennessee in Mississippi; and General Halleck, who was now in command of the armies of the Ohio and Tennessee, was preparing for a movement in this direction.

General Woodbine conjectured that the divisions lately organized would take part in this advance into the enemy's country, and he proved to be correct in his surmise. His brigade was organized on paper, and early in March it was gathered on the field. He had three regiments of Kentucky infantry, with the battery and the three companies of cavalry that served under

him at Barkville and elsewhere; and he believed he had as fine a body of troops as there was in the field.

When the brigade was fully organized, and had been drilled for a week in brigade evolutions, it was inspected by General Nelson. On this occasion the officers and privates of the cavalry and battery obtained their first sight of the division commander. He was certainly a good-looking man, and was pleasant and affable in his manner. Captain Lyon and Lieutenant Herndon were introduced to him; and in spite of what he had heard of him, Deck could not help liking him, and General Woodbine seemed to be on excellent terms with him.

"He is not such a terrible fellow as some of the boys think, Frank," said Deck to Herndon.

"Not a bit of it, Captain" —

"Don't do that!" interposed the newly promoted warmly.

"Do what?" demanded the lieutenant.

"If you call me captain, I shall feel obliged to address you as Lieutenant Herndon every time," replied Deck.

“Upon my word and sacred honor, I like the sound of the word, and I am happy that you were promoted instead of this Kentuckian,” replied the lieutenant; “but if you object so badly, I will not call you by your new title, except on duty, or when we have company, and then I must, of course, put the proper handle to your name.”

“All right, Frank. But what were you going to say about the division general?” asked Captain Lyon.

“I was about to say that General Nelson is a tremendous fellow. He has been a naval officer most of his active life, and when we come into the presence of an enemy he will be in favor of boarding him at once. He is a fighting character, not at all squeamish about going in where some of us will get hurt.”

“That is the kind of an officer for me,” added Deck.

After the inspection, and a stirring speech by the general of the fourth division, General Woodbine spoke some pleasant words complimentary to his superior, hoping and expecting that

the brigade would stand by the colors in any scene of peril into which the able and brave general would be likely to lead them, and then announced that Lieutenant Lyon had been promoted to the rank of captain, but would continue to serve on his staff, and that he was to be obeyed and respected as such.

The Riverlawns, the Marions, and the battery cheered these remarks very vigorously, and the hands of General Nelson went together with the others; and the young captain bowed to him with a martial salute. The parade was dismissed, and in the camp nothing was talked about but the new general and the new captain.

General Buell was at Nashville, which had been occupied by Federal troops since the middle of February. Six divisions were under the command of this officer, consisting of thirty-seven thousand effective men; and nearly as many more were disposed so as to protect his communications, and preserve order in Kentucky and Tennessee. It was the plan of General Halleck to concentrate the armies, and attack the enemy at Corinth. He sent a column up the Tennessee

under General C. F. Smith, to break up the railroad communications between Corinth, Jackson, the capital of Mississippi, and Humboldt, Tennessee.

This expedition was a failure on account of the great strength of the enemy at the points named. General Smith returned down the river, and debarked his force at Pittsburg Landing, not intending this place for the concentration of the army for the movement upon Corinth; for he knew nothing at all about it. General Halleck had already designated Savannah for this purpose. This town is on the east bank of the Tennessee, less than ten miles below Pittsburg Landing.

At Nashville, General Buell sent forward a detachment of cavalry from that city to Columbia, about forty miles south-south-west of the capital of Tennessee, to protect the bridges if it were still possible; for this town was on the direct road to Savannah, where the armies were to come together for the great movement upon Corinth. The Riverlawns and Marions were a part of this force.

Without orders from General Halleck, which came later, General Buell started the second division of his army under McCook, with his infantry column immediately after the cavalry. Within five days from the 15th of March, the fourth, fifth, sixth, and first divisions were on the march for Savannah in the order they are mentioned. This placed General Nelson's command in the advance, while General Thomas's was the last to move.

The cavalry saved all the bridges on the road except two. The one over Rutherford's Creek was no impediment; but that over Duck River, which is an affluent of the Tennessee, rising near the centre of the State, and about two hundred miles long, was a serious obstruction to the progress of the armies. The bridge was gone, and the water was forty feet deep. McCook's division was obliged to halt there.

General Buell's army was not provided with pontoons, as every considerable force was farther along in the war, and the stream was not fordable; the second division was compelled to halt there, and the fourth division, under the impa-

tient Nelson, soon came up to join in the tedious waiting.

General McCook was not a patient waiter; and having an Indiana regiment, composed largely of mechanics, he immediately began the construction of a bridge, for they might have to wait till summer for the water to be reduced to a fordable condition. Though a whole brigade worked diligently and energetically, the work was not finished till the end of the month.

The officers of the Riverlawns were not over patient at this delay, and many of the men were employed under their supervision in the work. Before the bridge was completed, it was known at the camp that General Grant and his army were on the west side of the Tennessee, in fact, at the point where General Smith had disembarked his force. The praises of the whole nation for the hero of Fort Donelson were ringing through the land, and General Nelson was in full sympathy with the people in their estimate of the generalship of Grant.

Corinth, at that time the stronghold of the Confederates, was not more than twenty miles

from Pittsburg Landing, and General Nelson was troubled lest Grant should be confronted by an overwhelming force at a time when he needed re-enforcements. But the bridge was not done, and the thirty-seven thousand soldiers on the west side of Duck River could not move forward to his support. Nelson was more impatient at the delay than the commander of the army, who did not share the fears of his subordinate.

“Woodbine, I am afraid Grant is in peril. With the whole Confederate army in this section within twenty miles of him, it may swoop down upon him and wipe him out,” said General Nelson, as he and the brigadier were observing the slow progress of the work on the bridge. “I have applied for permission to move forward.”

“Do you think of swimming your division across the river?” asked General Woodbine, with his cheerful smile.

“My wagons can’t swim,” replied General Nelson; “but I am satisfied that there is a ford somewhere on this river by which we can cross; and the next thing is to find it. General Buell replied to me that if I could get my men safely

over the river, with my trains, artillery, and baggage, I should have the advance of the army afterwards to the Tennessee River. That would just suit me. You have cavalry in your brigade, Woodbine, and I wish you to find this ford. Send one company up the river, and the other down. Who is that smart officer you have spoken to me about?"

"Do you mean Captain Lyon?"

"That is the man. Send him with one of the companies up the river."

"I am sure that Captain Lyon will find a ford if there is one," added General Woodbine, as he returned to his tent, where he found Deck studying a map of the State.

He explained what the general of the division wished to find, and said he had mentioned "the smart officer" on his staff in connection for the search for the ford.

"What is the use of sending a whole company on such a hunt, General?" asked Deck.

"That is what the general suggested, and I did not feel like asking any hard questions," said General Woodbine, who had already learned

to treat his immediate superior with the utmost deference. "But I think he is right; for we are in the enemy's country, and any small squad might be shot down while they were exploring the river. You know what is wanted, and you may give me your plan for doing what is required in an hour from now, Captain."

The commander left the tent, and Deck returned to his map.

CHAPTER XXVIII

AN UP-RIVER ENTERPRISE PROJECTED

THE problem that had been submitted for solution to Captain Lyon he regarded as a very easy one, and he could have given his reply before the general left the tent as well as an hour later. But he looked over his map, and followed the course of Duck River near Columbia for twenty miles in either direction. He had had occasion to study rivers on the Green and Cumberland; and he made up his mind where he should find a ford, if he found one at all at the present high stage of the streams.

He had settled the question in his own mind in ten minutes; and he left the tent to find the general and report to him. Lieutenant Herndon was at the outside of the entrance, but Captain Lyon did not feel at liberty to mention the mission to which he had been appointed.

"Which way did General Woodbine go, Frank?" he asked.

"He seemed to be walking about here for exercise," replied his companion on the staff. "Here he comes."

"What are you doing out here, Captain Lyon, when I gave you something to do at the desk?" asked the general, with something like a frown on his brow, though the young officer had very rarely seen such a thing there.

"I have done it, and I am ready to report, General," answered Deck.

"But I left you not ten minutes ago to do the work."

"The conundrum you gave me was not a hard one to guess; and if you had not left the tent so suddenly, I could have guessed it at sight."

"I suppose you have condemned the company of cavalry which General Nelson indicated to accompany you," added the general.

"On the contrary, I have not, but have approved it, as I did when you suggested that we were in the enemy's country; and there are Secessionists enough within twenty miles of Colum-

bia who would take pleasure in shooting any officer wearing a blue uniform, or private either, for that matter," answered Deck.

"What have you to report, then, since you fall in with General Nelson's idea?" inquired the brigadier.

"I don't think a company of cavalry, or if there are a dozen of them, could find the ford. It seems to me like setting an elephant to catch a mosquito," replied Deck, who could not help expressing his own opinion when he had one, but always with proper respect for that of others.

"Why so?"

"Because the troopers would not be able to follow the river. Probably there are steep banks in places on the stream to prevent them from getting near it."

"But a ford would be useless in such a locality, for the wagons could not get at it," the general objected.

"Perhaps they could; but I will not stop to argue that question. In other places there would be forests and soft ground where the horses could not pass," continued the captain.

"But a ford would be useless to us in such a place. I don't think you make out a case this time, Captain," replied the general, with a look of disappointment on his face.

"I think we shall want the company just the same; but I have not mentioned my plan yet," added Deck, who could not fail to see that the general was not as well pleased with him as he had often been.

"Then, what is your plan?" demanded General Woodbine, more impatient than he had ever seen him before.

"As I was walking along the river yesterday, I noticed, in the rear of a very fine residence, a handsome keel boat; and all I have to say, in addition to what I have said before, is that this boat is just the thing with which to find a ford in the river," replied Deck very quietly, and with nothing of the exultation he felt apparent in his manner, for he realized that he had solved the question effectually, and there could be no possible doubt of it in the minds of the two generals.

"Good!" exclaimed the general, as he sprang

forward, and grasped the hand of the captain. "It is as plain as daylight in a clear morning. Why didn't either of us generals think of that?"

"The simplest things are sometimes hidden the deepest," added Deck.

"Then, you will go up the river in the boat. And you will not want the cavalry company to go with you?"

"Not with me, General, for I could not get them into a boat of that size, especially not with their horses. But I want the troopers near the boat all the time, half of them on each side of the stream. If the river is not guarded, I shall come back dead or wounded; and that would not be pleasant for my father and mother, however it might be to me."

"You shall have the company; but how will you get half of it over the river in the absence of a bridge?"

"Every one of our horses can swim like an eel; for we used to take them across Green River and Bar Creek for the practice."

"Very well, you can arrange the matter to

suit yourself; and I should be sorry to have you shot, for we want to use you in the future, the near future General Nelson believes," added the general, as he went to the curtain of the tent, and called Lieutenant Herndon.

The staff-officer came at once, and looked curiously at both occupants of the tent.

"Now, Captain Lyon, tell the lieutenant where that boat is to be found."

"I have not been on the other side of the river for a very good reason," replied Deck; "but the house is the second one from where they are building the new bridge. If you walk ten rods or less along the river, you will see the boat on the other side. It is painted white, and is made fast by the painter to a sort of pier, extending out into the stream. You cannot very easily miss it."

"Is the painter on the wharf now? If he is, I should think he would get tired of standing there," inquired Herndon. "Perhaps he will bring the boat across the river, if I point my revolver at his head."

"I don't believe he will," answered Deck,

laughing heartily, in which the general joined him, for he knew what the painter was.

"Why do you laugh, Deck?" demanded Herndon, not conscious of his blunder.

"The painter is the rope by which the boat is made fast to the pier," added Deck.

"It is a queer painter," said the lieutenant. "I don't know that I ever was in a boat in my life; for I came from a hilly county, where boats are not of much account. But if the live painter is not there, how am I to get the boat; for the river just here is wider than it is deep?"

"I do not expect you to get it, Lieutenant," interposed the commander of the brigade. "Which company will you have, Captain?"

"Captain Gordon's, for Lieutenant Knox commands the second platoon, and he will bring over the boat."

"Lieutenant, ask Major Lyon to have Captain Gordon march his company to brigade headquarters as soon as possible, and to send Lieutenant Knox with"—

"Sergeant Fronklyn and Corporal Milton," added Deck, supplying the omission.

Herndon rushed out of the tent as though he was in a hurry. He found the three companies of cavalry drilling in a field in the rear of the brigade camp, and delivered his order to Major Lyon, who repeated it to Captain Gordon, and the officers whose names were given were sent on the instant. Herndon's horse had been at the picket near the tent, and he had not been obliged to walk the distance. Knox led the way at a mad gallop, but the staff-officer kept at his side all the way. Life did not even ask if there was an attack upon any of the camps, and saluted the general, who was standing with Deck in front of the tent.

"Go with the lieutenant, Captain Lyon, and point out the boat to him; and be sure to have him bring over the oars and the rudder," said the general.

Deck mounted Herndon's horse, and led the way up the road by the side of the river.

"Do you see that boat in the river on the other side, made fast to the pier, Life?" said Deck, pointing in the direction he indicated.

"Certainly I do; I am not blind, Captain

Lyon," replied the Kentuckian, who took great delight in repeating the young officer's name and title as often as he could.

"I want that boat," added Deck.

"That's easy enough," answered Life.

"But there is no bridge here now," suggested the captain.

"If there had been, we should have been nearer the Tennessee River than we are now, Captain Lyon. But we don't want no bridges for this business, Captain Lyon."

"Any bridges, Life?" laughed Deck.

"Any bridges," repeated Life. "Do you want that boat now, Captain Lyon?"

"As soon as we can get it."

Lieutenant Knox looked up the river, and saw a place where there was a steep descent to the stream, which was used as a watering-place for horses and cattle. Then calling the two non-commissioned officers to follow him, he galloped to the spot, and hardly checking the speed of his powerful steed, he plunged into the river. His horse was accustomed to swimming, and to swimming with the stalwart cavalryman on his

back. He swam rapidly, and his neigh in the water was answered by the other two horses. In a few minutes he was at the other side of the river. He found a sandy shore there, which seemed to be used for a bathing-place for the occupants of the handsome house.

The three troopers rode up the slope, and landed in a road leading to a garden. Corporal Milton was used to handling a flat, and the lieutenant selected him to take the boat to the other side. The latter dismounted, and started for the pier just as four negroes rushed down the road from an outbuilding.

“You gwine to steal Mars’r’s boat. He don’t let you do that,” one of them belched out.

“We are going to take the boat; but you can have it after we have done with it,” replied the lieutenant.

“No, sar! can’t hab de boat!” protested the negro who seemed to be the boss.

“Now go back to your shop, Pinkeye, and don’t make any more noise,” said Life, as he pointed his revolver at the group, Fronklyn doing the same, while Milton was detaching the

painter from the pier. He did not wait to see the result of the affair on the shore, but jumped into the boat, and shoved off. Fronklyn had taken the corporal's horse by the bridle-rein, with the intention of swimming him over the river. The negroes did not like the looks of the revolvers, and they retired to the outbuilding.

"We needn't wait any longer," said Life, as he started for the sloping beach.

Just then an old gentleman came out of the house with a gun in his hand. Without waiting to challenge the couple in the water, he fired his piece. Fortunately he did not hit either of them; but each of them returned the fire, and the old man dropped upon the ground. The horses swam to the other side, and reached it before Milton came with the boat.

They had the satisfaction of seeing the old gentleman, who was probably the owner of the house and the boat, rise from the ground, rubbing his right thigh, for the soldiers did not intend to kill him, and Knox had told his companion to aim at his legs. Doubtless it was the shock of the wound that had caused him to fall.

Life hastened to headquarters as soon as he came out of the water, leaving Fronklyn and Milton in charge of the craft, and reported that the boat was at the watering-place, ready for use. It contained four oars and a rudder.

Captain Gordon's company had halted in front of the tent, and General Woodbine had explained to the commander of it what he was to do. It was arranged that one platoon should follow the river on each side, looking out for enemies; and they were to keep as near the stream as the roads or the condition of the country would permit.

A call was then made upon the members of the body for all men who had had any experience in rowing a boat to manifest it; and about a dozen signified that they could row, and had done so. Half the number were selected by Deck, after questioning them briefly. Their horses were sent back to the camp, and they were required to go up to the boat. Captain Lyon was understood to be the leader of the enterprise, and the officers were directed to take their orders from him.

CHAPTER XXIX

A SUCCESSFUL MISSION UP THE STREAM

ANOTHER expedition, precisely like that organized by Captain Lyon, and guarded by the second company of Riverlawns, was sent down the river. A long flat was obtained after some search; and Corporal Milton, as the person the most familiar with boating, was appointed to make the exploration in it, at the suggestion of the leader of the other searching-party.

Deck and the six oarsmen for the up-river trip went to the watering-place, followed by Captain Gordon's company. Lieutenant Knox was given the opposite side of the stream; and without any hesitation the platoon plunged into the water, and went across as readily as though it had been a level piece of ground. The captain wished he had the six negroes who pulled the Magnolia on Green River and Bar Creek, for they were well trained to their work.

He placed the men on the thwarts, with one of the six in the bow, having a pole to sound the depth of water from time to time, and another similarly armed near himself in the stern. When he told them to give way they made bad work of their rowing, for they had never pulled together, and he was obliged to train them before they started; but in a few minutes they did better.

The captain took the tiller-ropes, and steered the boat himself. He kept the two men sounding with their poles all the time; and, as the implements were only six feet long, they reported "no bottom," as they were instructed to do, for the first two miles. Deck put into use all the river craft he had acquired; and he was sorry he had not brought his brother with him, but he was the orderly of the major, practically his aid-de-camp, and he did not like to call him away from his ordinary duties.

"Nothing but 'no bottom' so far," said the captain, as the boat reached a widening of the river making quite a large pond.

"It won't be so deep here, Captain," replied

Walker, the trooper in the stern-sheets with him.

“There appears to be no mud on the shore, and it looks like a sandy region,” added Deck, looking over the banks of the stream.

As he did so he saw the platoons on each side; and they were keeping near the river, as they had been ordered to do.

“Under water six feet,” reported Beckland in the bow; and he appeared to have picked up some of the lingo of the regular pilots, for he had served as an engineer.

“What does that mean, Captain?” asked Walker, who had never been a steamboat man.

“It means that the water is a little over six feet deep, and that Beckland finds bottom by reaching his arm down below the surface,” replied the captain. “The river is shoaling, and we may find here the place we are looking for.”

“What are you looking for, Captain Lyon?” asked Walker, for the object of the expedition had not been explained to the men.

“We are looking for shoal water,” returned the

leader, without giving any further information in regard to the object of the expedition.

Looking ahead some distance, Deck saw the platoon of Lieutenant Belthorpe coming down to the shore. There was a forest extending down nearly to the water, where the horses were drinking; for they had not swum the river, as the other platoon had. They stood on a sandy beach; and advancing a little farther, he discovered an opening in the woods which looked like a road.

“Five feet!” called Beckland from the bow.

“Six feet!” added Walker.

“There is a sharp pitch on the bottom here,” Deck remarked.

“Four feet,” said the bowman.

“Five feet,” Walker followed.

“It is shoaling rapidly,” said the captain.

“Three and a half feet,” continued Beckland.

The oarsmen continued to pull at the oars in the regular time Deck had given them, and they were doing very well now. The bowman gave the same figures for nearly a quarter of a mile, and Walker reported the same. But then the depth increased till it came back to no bottom.

The captain began to come about, with the head of the boat inclined towards the shore, where the platoon was moving along near the water. He continued to descend the river, till Beckland again reported three feet and a half. Then he headed the boat directly for the shore. The cavalry retraced their steps on the sandy beach, and Captain Gordon halted them at the point towards which the boat was headed. In a few minutes the bottom of the keel grated in the sand.

"How do you get on, Captain Lyon?" asked the commander of the company, as he drove his horse into the water till he was alongside the stern-sheets.

"Very well; but it has been 'no bottom' all the way up till we came to this pond," replied Deck. "I want about twenty sticks, say an inch in diameter and four feet long, dry, if they can be found."

"All right; you shall have them in a few minutes," replied the captain, as he called Sergeant Yowell from the company, ordering him to take half a dozen men, and find the sticks

required. "It looks as though the water was not as deep as it was below."

"It is spread out here, and the broader the stream, the less the depth," replied Deck, as he resumed his seat in the boat. "Captain Gordon, I shall want your men, or as many of them as you choose to send, to take to the water, if we are so fortunate as to find anything that will pass for a ford."

"Very well; and, as it is a soft, warm day, I think we will all take a swim," replied the commander of the company.

"I hope you will not have to swim your horses," replied Deck, as he took several fish-lines from under the seat, and began to unreel them.

"Are you going fishing, Captain Lyon?" asked the commander of the company, with a laugh.

"Not much."

"I was going to say that if you intend to fish, you will do better in deeper water than it is up here," added Captain Gordon.

"I have other fish to fry than those caught in Duck River," replied Deck, as he measured off

about three feet from one of the lines after he had cut off the hooks and sinker.

“What do you want of the sticks, Captain?”

“If we are so fortunate as to find a ford here, I shall buoy it off so that you can find your way over to the other side,” replied Deck, as he handed another of the lines to Walker, and required him to treat it as he had the first one.

“I think I can find my way over to the other side, after I have observed the course of your boat, without any buoys,” added Captain Gordon.

“Then they are for another use,” said Deck, laughing.

“Here are a couple of men with some of the sticks.”

The two men had dismounted in order to do what was required of them; and one of the mounted men brought off the buoys, as they were intended to be. Deck fastened one end of a line to the end of a stick, and then set the men in the boat to doing the same thing.

“I shall want as many stones as sticks, weighing about three pounds apiece, Captain Gordon,” continued Deck; and men were sent to look

them up, and one of them had noticed a ledge on the edge of the woods where there were plenty of them.

As soon as some of the stones came, Deck attached a few to the ends of the lines, so as to form an anchor for the buoys, to keep them standing upright in the water. When the men saw how it was done, they did the rest of them as fast as the stones came, and the job was soon completed.

"I will signal you by waving my cap in the air, Captain Gordon, when I am ready for your men to come over," said Deck, as he called to his crew to take their oars.

"All right, Captain; we will be on the lookout for the signal."

By this time a couple of farmers and some boys had gathered on the shore to see what was going on; but the troopers drove them away, though the captain had some doubts as to whether he had not better put them under guard, to prevent them from bringing a force of the enemy if there were any of them near enough. Deck ordered his crew to give way,

and the two men to sound as they had done before.

"Three feet and a half," Beckland reported.

Deck adjusted the line, and threw one of the stones, with its buoy, over it into the water.

The stick stood up "like a little man," and could be plainly seen from the shore. The boat proceeded, and the buoys were anchored at suitable distances from each other till the boat reached the middle of the river.

"Four feet," Beckland reported; and the depth increased till "No bottom" again became the legend. This was deep enough to drown the infantry of the brigade.

"It is useless to go any farther in this direction," said Deck, disappointed at the result he had just obtained; and he put the boat about, steering for the last buoy he had anchored. "Sound all the time," he added to those who were attending to this duty.

"Three feet and a half," said Beckland, as they approached the first buoy.

Captain Lyon then began to move the boat up stream, and sounded in a circle till he ob-

tained the width of the shoal at the bottom, and set a buoy on each side of it. Then getting over to the middle of it, he held a course up the river till six feet was given again. Backing the boat to the shoal, he described another circle, which brought him to three feet and a half again, nearer to Lieutenant Knox's side of the river; and he had halted his platoon on a sandy beach like that the boat had just left.

The shoal now extended towards Life's side; and Deck followed it till three feet were reported, and then a depth that could be waded by a boy of ten years. He had planted the buoys all the way along the tortuous ford, and now he was within hailing distance of the tall Kentuckian.

"Lieutenant Knox!" shouted Deck, as the boat approached the shore.

"Captain Lyon!" Life responded, with the usual emphasis on the title.

"Be ready to ford the river!" added Deck.

"All ready!" was the reply that came back.

"March!" shouted the captain, as he anchored

the last buoy about a hundred feet from the shore. "Oars!" he added, and his crew stopped pulling; and if they had been in the navy they would have stood their oars on end.

The platoon on the shore marched by fours into the river, and directed their course towards the boat, which came about as they advanced, and led the way, keeping the buoys on the right, as Deck gave the order to Knox. The way was as plain as a lighted street in the evening. In twenty minutes the procession had crossed the flood, and not a horse had been obliged to swim a yard, unless he did it for the fun of it.

The company was united on the strand; and though no one had been told the object of all these proceedings, they all understood by this time the meaning of them, and the men gave three cheers as Deck got out of the boat. If he felt particularly happy at this time, with his completed mission a decided success, he could not be blamed for it. But he was in a hurry to report to his general the result of the expedition; and he did not stop to indulge in any

fine words, but simply saluted the company when they cheered.

As he had found Life's company on the other side, he had not made the signal agreed upon with Captain Gordon, and Life's platoon had tested the ford.

"This ford must not be left unguarded, Captain Gordon," said Deck, saluting the commander. "The enemy, or even some of the farmers, who are probably Secessionists, may remove the buoys in our absence."

"I was just thinking of that, and intended to leave a guard on both sides of the river," replied the captain.

"Then excuse me for mentioning it," added Deck.

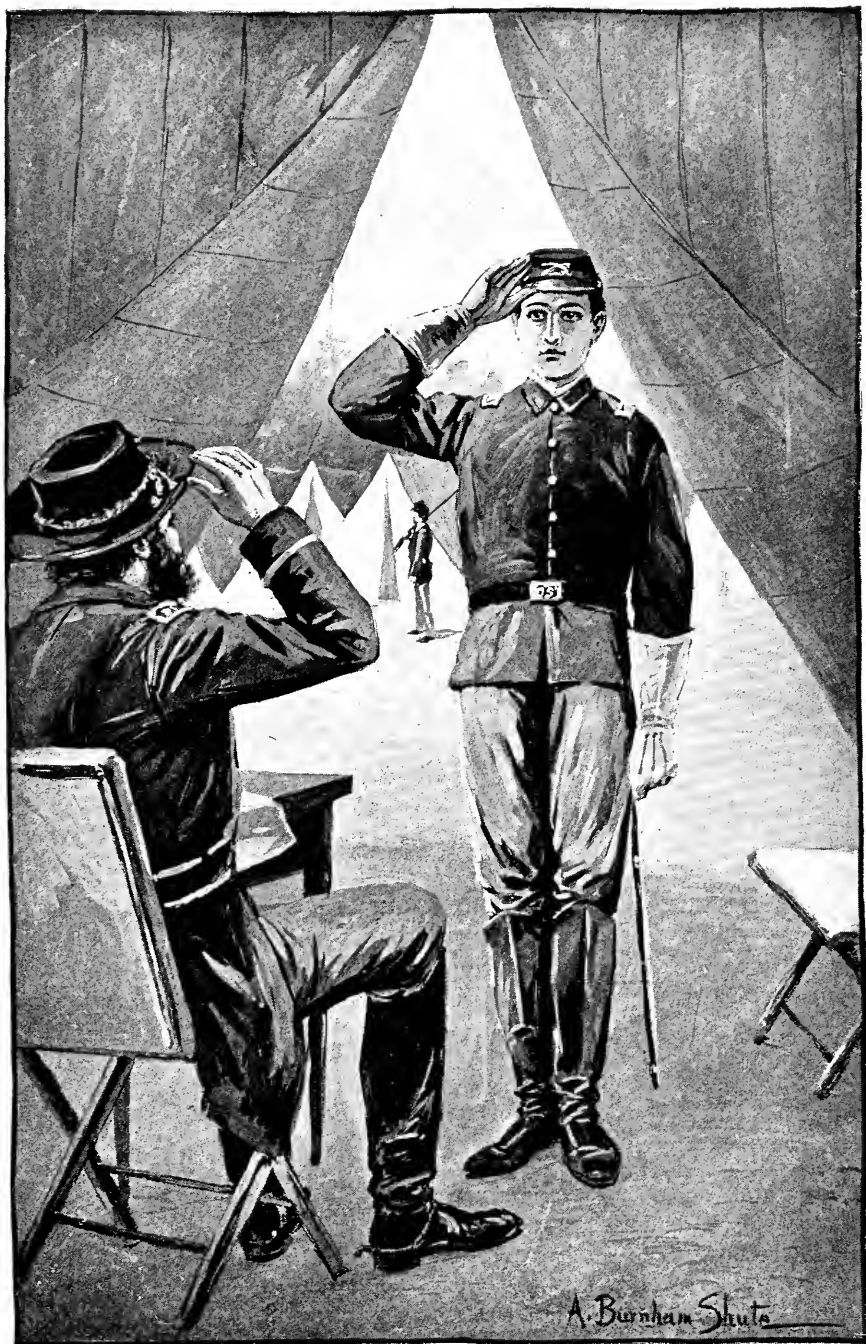
"You are the representative of General Woodbine, and no excuse is necessary," replied the captain of the company with a smile.

"If you will designate the officer to be in charge of the guard, I shall be glad to ride his horse back to the camp, and he can take my place in the boat, where he will be quite comfortable," continued Deck.

"Lieutenant Belthorpe," said the captain.

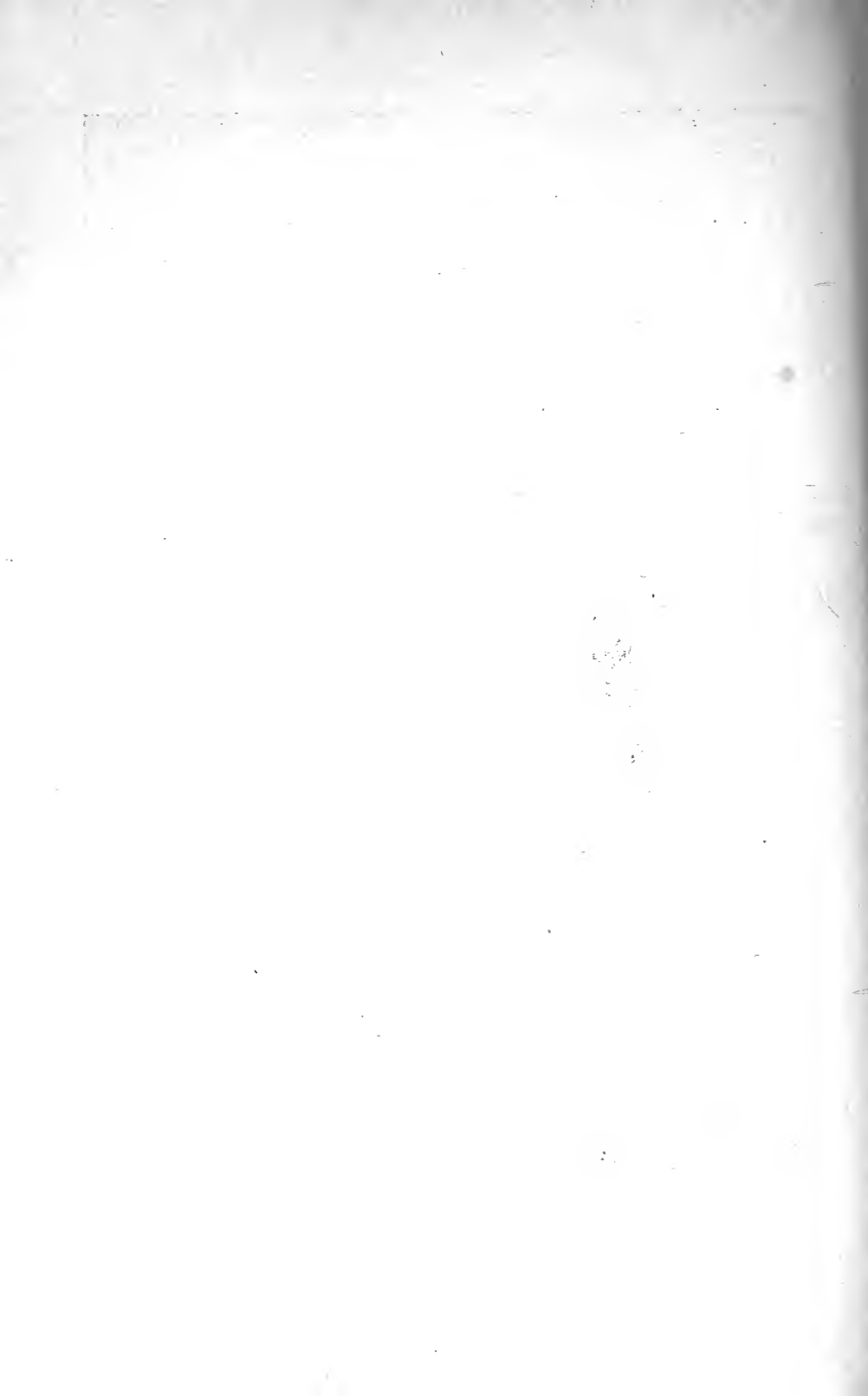
"I am glad to see you, Tom," said Captain Lyon, as he took the hand of his friend and neighbor at Riverlawn. "We don't meet as often as formerly;" and he proceeded to mount his steed. "You can keep yourself comfortable in the boat, and see everything that is going on upon both sides of the river."

Twenty men were detailed to guard the ford, and Sergeant Fronklyn was sent across the stream with half of them. The rest of the company rode at full speed back to the headquarters, at the entrance of which both Generals Nelson and Woodbine were seated.



"Captain Lyon was invited into the tent."

Page 383.



CHAPTER XXX

THE GENERAL'S HURRIED MARCH

THE expedition had been absent not more than three hours, and it was only three o'clock in the afternoon. Both the division and the brigade commanders rose from their stools, and seemed to be greatly astonished at the early return of the company from their mission. The command was sent back to the camp, and Captain Lyon was invited into the tent with the general of division.

"Well, Captain Lyon, what success have you had?" inquired General Nelson, who was an impetuous man, and whose mind was fixed upon the march he had in view.

"Perfect success, General," replied Deck.

"You have found a ford?" demanded the general, and his browned face had been clouded with anxiety.

"I have found a ford, but it is a crooked one."

"Six feet of water on it all the way?"

"Not more than three feet and a half in any place."

"That is a very reasonable depth; and you say it is crooked," added General Nelson. "But I suppose you can pilot the division across."

"You will have no occasion for a pilot, General," answered Deck, inclined to be excited, but controlling himself with a strong effort, and replying as quietly as though he had been on a picnic with less distinguished persons.

"But you say the ford is very crooked."

"It is about like a man's leg, bent at the knee, and again at the turning of the foot," added Deck, as he went to the table, and made a hasty diagram of the shape of the shoal at the bottom of the river, which he presented to the superior general, who took it, and looked at it with decided interest. "The water above and below the shoal is six feet and more in depth. The report of the man sounding on the way up the river was 'no bottom,' using a pole six feet long."

"Are you a sailor, Captain Lyon?" asked the general abruptly.

"I am not, General; I never even saw the sea but once, and never sailed upon it, though I am somewhat accustomed to the use of boats."

"You use some nautical terms, I have observed," continued the general, as he gave his attention to the diagram again. "But how are we to find our way along this crooked ford, as shown in this drawing, without a pilot?"

"I have buoyed the ford all the way across," answered the young captain as quietly as before.

"Buoyed the ford! You are a jewel! I can understand now what General Woodbine has said about you, when I thought he was overdoing the thing. How did you buoy the ford?"

Deck explained how he had done it, and added that he should have put a little flag on the sticks if he had had the material for them.

"Captain Gordon left a guard at the ford of ten men on each side of the river, to prevent the buoys from being removed by the enemy," added Deck.

"How far is the ford from the camp?"

"I judged that it was about three miles."

"And the approaches to it?"

“Excellent on this side, and Lieutenant Knox reports a road within three miles of the shore, leading in one direction to the Tennessee and Alabama Railroad, projected, but not built, on the other side,” replied Deck.

“That makes a very clear case of it; and I thank you, Captain Lyon, for your meritorious service,” said the general, as he rose from his stool, which had been dancing on the ground under the excitement of the occupant some of the time, for his project was a cherished one to him.

Deck bowed low to the division commander, who hastened out of the tent, though he returned from the curtain to the table for the diagram of the ford. Doubtless he intended to put himself in communication with General Buell as soon as possible. At supper-time Major Lyon ordered the guard at the ford to be relieved, and twenty men departed under command of Lieutenant Gadbury to relieve the watchers at the ford.

The second company had returned from their expedition down the river; and they had found what they called a ford, though there were over

four feet upon it, and the approaches to it were very unsatisfactory for the trains. The general was already decided, and before dark orders came for the brigade to march for the ford at six the next morning.

"Things are getting lively again, Deck," said Lieutenant Herndon in the evening.

"It looks so," replied the other. "We begin on an eighty-mile march to-morrow morning; and what comes after that we don't know."

"Even the staff-officers don't know what is going on most of the time," added Herndon. "We don't know what will come next; and we are not likely to know before we get into the midst of a big battle, for I am persuaded there is to be one down here somewhere."

"I don't know that it makes any great difference to us, anyway; all we have to do is to discharge the duty assigned to us, and we shall find out soon enough 'where we are at.'"

Deck was tired after the exertion of the day, and the excitement had passed off; and he stretched himself on his bed of straw, with his blanket spread over him, and was soon asleep.

At midnight the guard at the river was relieved by Lieutenant Knox, and the ten men sent across the stream in the darkness, though they had light enough to enable them to make out the buoys.

At four o'clock in the morning the bugles began to sound through the brigade camp, and the "Assemblies" of the different arms were all mixed together. The men had filled their haversacks the night before with the food to be used on the march, but breakfast was served before the start. At six o'clock the entire division was in column, ready for the march to the ford. The trains were in the rear of each command. The cavalry of General Woodbine's brigade went first, and reached the ford in advance of the infantry. Agreeably to his orders, Major Lyon stretched a line of troopers across the river on the lower side of the shoal, so that the road for the infantry lay between them and the buoys. The passage of this arm of the service was more difficult than for mounted men; for it was not an easy thing for men to march in three and a half feet of water on foot.

However brave men may be on the field of battle, some may become timid in the midst of a running river. They are up to or above their middle in the treacherous element; and on this occasion two privates lost their presence of mind, or stumbled over rocks on the bottom, and were swept to the cavalry line by the current, though it was not very swift at the present high stage of the stream. They were promptly picked up, and set on their feet by the troopers, and continued on their way.

All the infantry passed safely over, and the trains were equally fortunate. Ammen's brigade was the first to cross the stream; and, coming out of the water, followed the road to Columbia, and then continued on the railroad to Mount Pleasant, which was as far as it was built. The details of the march need not be given. From the town, or hamlet, it was continued over the narrow road, in poor condition, to Waynesboro, from which an ordinary road led to Savannah, where the various divisions were to concentrate. General Nelson, impetuous and impatient, hurried his march; for he, if no other general, be-

lieved his division would be needed to re-enforce the divisions under General Grant.

General Buell received no word from General Grant to the effect that he needed additional troops from the army of the former; and he had obtained permission from General Halleck to halt at Waynesboro to rest his army and to "brush up," so that his forces should be in good condition to meet the other divisions of the Union army at Savannah. General Nelson had not been informed of this purpose to rest; and he hurried on at his break-neck gait, intent only upon rendering the needed aid to General Grant.

Some twenty miles below Savannah, on the Tennessee, was Hamburg Landing, and General Buell was considering the propriety of sending a portion of his force to this place; but the rapid movements of General Nelson defeated this project, as well as the rest at Waynesboro. It required six miles of road to enable a division to move freely. The hurry of the general of the fourth division had been communicated to the other commands in the rear, and they had passed the point for rest before any orders reached them.

At Columbia, General Buell received his first information that General Grant was on the west side of the Tennessee. The fourth division had the head of the marching columns, and had left Columbia on the morning of March 29. The bridge over Duck River was finished that day; and two days later the Army of the Ohio began to move, with sufficient interval between the divisions to prevent confusion on the narrow and inadequate roads. The rapid movement of the fourth division, leading the van of the great host, though the repose and brushing up at Waynesboro was defeated by it, stimulated the speed of the forces behind him; and they were too late to receive the orders of the general-in-chief to halt.

Telegraphic communication between General Grant and General Nelson was opened April 3, and the commander of the fourth division sent a message that his force could be in Savannah on the 5th; but the former replied that he need not hurry his march, for the transport steamers to convey his command across the river would not be ready till the 8th. But the general seems

to have been wrought up to such a pitch as to be incapable of reducing the speed of his battalions, and he hurried on with as much vigor as before.

It is not to be believed that the impetuous general had any special inspiration or miraculous foreknowledge of events; but General Johnston was at that time marching his entire army from Corinth, with the intention of wiping out the army of General Grant before General Buell could re-enforce him. General Nelson seems to have been the "right man in the right place," whether it was by the accident of his impetuosity, or a special Providence, in the salvation of the Union.

On the 4th and 5th of April it rained in torrents about all the time, and the roads, never good, were cut up and broken up so as to be almost impassable; but the resolute commander kept on his course as though the ground were frozen, and the weather were that of a dry June, and reached Savannah on the 5th, the day before the battle of Pittsburg Landing, or Shiloh, had begun.

In the face of General Nelson's apparently prophetic vision, it seems to be an established fact that General Halleck, the superior officer of all the generals present or absent, General Grant, and the able commanders on the field where the great battle was fought, had not the most distant idea that the enemy would advance in force from Corinth. General Halleck was still in St. Louis, though he intended to command the concentrated armies of the Union in the attack upon Corinth.

General Sherman, the right-hand man of General Grant, informed him that the enemy had cavalry in front of the lines, and he thought there were two regiments and a battery six miles distant, but he did not apprehend any attack. The battle came off several days before it was expected to occur, if at all; and General Halleck had appointed his day to leave St. Louis the day after the burden of the battle had been fought.

General Nelson was at Savannah on the 5th of April; and the fifth division under General Crittenden arrived the same night, and encamped several miles distant. But no one expected that

one of the bloodiest battles of the war was to be fought the next day. The troops were wet, and the country was partially flooded from the heavy rains. It was not a good preparation for a terrible combat, and thousands who thought of happy homes far distant from the awful scene of carnage slept their last sleep on the bloody field before another night closed upon them.

"This is not exactly comfortable, Frank," said Deck, as they met in the tent of General Woodbine after the duties of the day were done.

"I don't think it is, and I almost wish I was at home in my father's house by a good light wood-fire," replied Frank.

"I feel as much like grumbling as I ever did in my life ; but we are here in the cause of the blessed Union, and if we fail to do our duty the United States will cease to exist ; and I often feel as though the whole work of the war rested on my shoulders, and I will not growl at anything," added Deck, more serious than usual.

The general came in, and they all went to their uncomfortable beds.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE FIRST DAY AT PITTSBURG LANDING

GENERAL BUELL arrived at Savannah on the same day that the fourth division did, and he had an appointment to meet General Grant on the following day. On the morning of April 6th, both generals were at this town, nine or ten miles below the scene of the battle. The commander of the army on the other side of the river was taking an early breakfast with his staff, in readiness for his meeting with General Buell. The sound of booming guns was heard while they were so engaged; and, instead of going to meet him, he wrote a hurried note to him, and hastened up the river to join his command.

On the Friday before, the horse of the commanding general had fallen in the roughness and among the pitfalls of the region; and his rider had been thrown under him, and was severely injured, or what would have been severely at any

other time. He was in great pain for a few days, and was partially disabled for a week; but he did not intermit his labors in the cause in which he was engaged.

Hastening to the river, he went on board of a steamer, and started for the field, ready for any emergency that might be presented to him. On the way he stopped at Crump's Landing, sent a message to General Lew Wallace, who was there with his division of five thousand men, and later another to General Nelson, to hasten forward with their commands. On his arrival at Pittsburg Landing, he rushed to the front as rapidly as his horse could bear him. He found the situation not as hopeful as he could desire. It has been said that he was surprised by the enemy; and in one sense this was true. Neither he nor any of the other generals, including General Halleck at St. Louis, who intended to lead the combined armies in an attack upon the enemy at Corinth, anticipated a pitched battle where it occurred, or anywhere else except at Corinth. General Grant was surprised to find the whole Confederate army in that section under General

Johnston in front of him; but he was not surprised in the ordinary and technical sense of the word, for there had been skirmishing with the enemy's pickets for several days.

On that bright and quiet Sunday morning the battle began, and the commander of the force was at the front. In his note to General Buell, with his apology for not meeting him as arranged, he ordered General Nelson's division to be moved to a point "opposite Pittsburg Landing." No other division was mentioned in the note, indicating that General Grant did not expect such an engagement as that which followed.

General Nelson was eager to obey the order; and he sought to find a guide for his command to the point indicated, but none could be obtained. He sent Captain Kendrick of his staff to explore the region, and find a practicable route to the battlefield. During the absence of this officer, the sound of booming guns had become more distinct and significant, and indicated a general battle. The impatience of the fiery commander of the fourth division may be imagined when Captain Kendrick did not return till noon.

He reported that the road near the river had been overflowed by the recent heavy rain, and was not in condition for use.

The captain also reported another road which was practicable for infantry and cavalry, but not for artillery and trains. By this time a guide had been found, and the division was put in rapid motion. The roar of the heavy guns became more distinct, and all the evidences of a great battle were clear enough. The gunboats were firing at the flanks of the enemy; and the din from the distance was fearful to the impatient soldiers, anxious to take a hand in the conflict.

Unhappily, all in that terrible fight were not so anxious to be in the thickest of it. At the beginning of the battle the Union army consisted of thirty-three thousand men, with General Wallace's five thousand at Crump's Landing. The Confederate army under General Johnston were reported by General Beauregard at forty thousand. Vast numbers of the Union troops were direct from their shops and farms, and were not sufficiently drilled and seasoned to war to be steady and reliable in such a fierce conflict.

The onslaught and slaughter had been terrible ; and it was estimated that six to eight thousand of them were demoralized, and fled from the field, crouching for safety under the banks of the river, or in the creeks that flowed across the battlefield. But, in spite of the fact that nearly or quite a fourth part of the army had fled in terror from the bloody onslaught of the enemy, the lines were only temporarily broken, and the gaps were speedily filled by troops who had been hardened to such terrific scenes.

It was five o'clock in the afternoon when General Nelson succeeded in sending Ammen's brigade over the river with a portion of the cavalry of the division. Later in the day the rest of the fourth were ferried over to the battlefield. The sight that greeted them as they approached the west shore of the river was appalling beyond description, with thousands of demoralized and trembling soldiers in such shelter from shot, shell, and bullets as they could find, while the roar of the conflict still sounded not far from them.

" This is horrible ! " exclaimed Lieutenant Herndon, as the steamer approached the shore.

"I am sorry to know that these men have deserted the field," replied Captain Lyon.

"You can hardly wonder at it, Deck; for I suppose they are like so many who have been brought into the field in face of the enemy, with little or no drill or training, and it is a terrible thing for a green soldier to stand up before a volley from the enemy, with artillery blazing at them, as we can judge that it was from the sounds that have reached our ears."

"I can pity without blaming them, for it was a fearful ordeal for men such as you describe," replied Deck. "As I heard my father say in a speech to the men, it requires a moral force behind the physical to enable a soldier to stand up before the enemy, facing death and mangling wounds, without flinching. We have always found that the most ignorant and ruffianly men make the most unreliable soldiers. As father said, it is the soul rather than the body that makes the true soldier."

"You are quite correct, and Major Lyon is one of the best specimens of the well-informed officer; but we are close to the shore, and I think we

have a chance to apply the philosophy of your worthy father," added the lieutenant, as they prepared to land in advance of the infantry, being on their horses on the forecastle of the steamer.

The battle-ground lay between Lick Creek on the north and Snake Creek on the south, and was nearly surrounded by them. The brigade landed, and moved with all speed to the heat of the action; and if it had ceased there, the victory would have been theirs; but it did not cease there, as the Confederates evidently believed it would; for the night was coming on, and they certainly had the advantage at this time. In the hope and expectation of finishing the hard-fought battle of the day, the right of their line under General Bragg had been hurled against the left of General Grant's line; and the crisis of the fight seemed to be at this point.

With ringing cheers Ammen's brigade marched up the Corinth road, proving that the sickening sight of the stragglers by the river had not demoralized them, but appeared rather to have increased their courage and resolution. General Bragg's assault had become a partial success; and

the fortune of the day was wavering at this point, for it was only necessary to push back the Union left the eighth of a mile for the enemy to reach Pittsburg Landing, and then the Federal army could no longer hold its position.

The Riverlawn Cavalry led the march; and the Marions had been left on the opposite side of the river, for the boat had not space enough on its deck for them. An unsupported battery was in sight, and General Woodbine ordered his brigade in that direction. Major Lyon was at the head of his column, with Captain Gordon near him. The general of brigade was on the left flank, near the ravine, which had flooded its bank, and was a broad sheet of water.

As the head of the column approached the battery, which was playing on the thickest of the assaulting command, Captain Gordon suddenly dropped from his horse; but he was not killed, for he tried to stand up after he struck the ground. He was borne by a couple of troopers to the brink of the ravine, and placed in the shadow of a solitary tree.

“Captain Lyon!” shouted the general.

“Here, General,” replied Deck, riding up to him, for he was some distance in advance of him, and saluting him as though they were still in camp.

“Take the command of the first company of your cavalry!” added the brigadier decidedly and earnestly, for he was fully in the spirit of the occasion.

Deck saluted him in reply; and pressing his heels against the flanks of his steed, for he wore only dummy spurs, Ceph galloped forward at his best speed in spite of the soft ground beneath him, and the rider was soon in the presence of his father.

“I am ordered by the general to take command of the first company,” said he, when he had saluted the major.

“Very well; do your duty, Dexter,” replied the major, speaking this time rather as the father than as the military superior. “A company of cavalry is hastening towards the battery.”

The enemy had seen that this battery was not supported, and the cavalry had evidently been sent to capture it. Probably the force that had

been posted with it for its protection had fled in terror, as so many thousands did that day. The foe wanted those guns for a trophy, if nothing more, and the opportunity was favorable for them.

“Company — attention !” shouted Deck at the top of his lungs. “Gallop — march ! To the charge !”

This command was received by the members of the first company with a volley of vigorous cheers, and the captain felt that the men had not been demoralized or disheartened by the pitiable sights they had seen on the march. No doubt they were all grieved at the fall of their captain, but they had no time to think of this. They knew the temporary captain, and they had seen him in some desperate encounters with mounted men.

The Confederate cavalry were galloping madly down a slope, stimulated by the hope of immediate victory. Ammen's brigade opened a steady and deadly fire upon the infantry in front of them, but gave no attention to the cavalry. The battery kept up its fire of shells ; and one passed

through the approaching company of mounted men, and not a few of them dropped from their horses. But they did not seem to be appalled by this misfortune, and dashed forward with even more vigor than before, evidently with the intention of stilling the guns by capturing them.

Deck led his company forward past the guns, meeting the enemy at the foot of the slope. General Woodbine rode forward at the same time, and ordered Major Lyon to send the second company to the left of the first, where there was space enough to enable them to fall upon the right of the company, thus outnumbering them two to one. Captain Truman moved forward in obedience to this order just as the first struck the enemy.

Deck saw that the captain of the company rode at the left of his command, and quite up to the front of it. He felt, with a captain's commission in his pocket, he could not do less than take a similar position on the right of the first River-lawn. He scrutinized very closely the face and form of the officer on the other side. He thought

from his uniform that he might be a Texan Ranger, but he had never seen him before.

He was a young man, hardly more than twenty, with a handsome face; but he was rather under than over medium size, and he rode a small horse, like some other Texans he had met. His face was rather pale, and it was evident to Deck that he was hardly equal to the hardships of campaign life. His company were using the Confederate yell for all it was worth, which the Union troopers had heard before, and they were not intimidated by it. The young captain was yelling with them, and Deck realized that he was a brave fellow.

"Cheer, my men!" shouted Deck, as they approached the enemy, and his troopers drowned the yell of the enemy.

As they scraped their throats with the vigor of their cry, they fell upon their opponents, who had doubtless been fighting all day, while they were fresh from the camp. It was a tremendous onslaught they made, and the foe shook before it. The captain shouted furiously at his command as the men wavered before the shock. He

seemed to be a favorite with them; for they heeded his appeals, and defended themselves with renewed energy.

Men fell to the ground on both sides, sabres clashed, and revolvers snapped in the fight. The Confederate captain seemed to be mad, and he had a great deal of vim in his composition. Suddenly, as though he desired to give his men a specimen of what they ought to do, he galloped his horse to the spot where Deck was watching the conflict, and struck a fierce blow at him with his sabre.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE FINAL RESULT OF THE GREAT BATTLE

CAPTAIN LYON was almost sorry that this brave young officer had determined to have a personal encounter with him; for several affairs of this kind had given him a confidence in himself, and quite as much in his horse, which made him feel in the beginning that the young Confederate captain would get the worst of it. He had seen that Deck was giving orders to his men, and stimulating them to renewed exertions; and very likely, if he were out of the way, the path to victory would be clearer to his command.

Deck readily parried the sabre-stroke of the captain, and with several strokes with his weapon compelled the brave fellow to back away a little from him. But he immediately recovered his vim, and made another bold dash at his opponent, who quickened his cuts, and was determined to bring down his foe. The Riverlawn

found that he had his hands full, and he decided to depend a little more upon the energies of Ceph.

Under the criticisms of his superior officers, he had before decided not to resort to his peculiar tactics unless in a case of emergency, as he deemed the present moment to be. He manipulated his rein with his left hand, and pressed his horse's flanks with the dummy spurs, as he did when he wanted him to leap over any object. Ceph understood him as plainly as though he had the use of language, and the word had been spoken to him. The signal was given at a favorable moment, just as he had parried a vigorous cut of his opponent; and Ceph mounted on his hind feet, and came down on the captain as his rider gave him a terrible blow with his sabre on the head. Man and horse went down together; and the officer did not move again, though his steed scrambled to his feet, and darted off with his rider's left foot entangled in the stirrup.

Just as Captain Lyon was achieving this feat, Captain Truman's company struck the flank of the enemy, and began to cut their way through

the force as the men were turned aside by the tremendous onslaught of the fresh troopers. The acting second lieutenant, Life Knox, with his great strength, brought a man down every time he struck with his sabre. His long arms kept his enemy at a distance till the foe was tumbled from his horse. It was plain enough to the first lieutenant of the Confederate company, who succeeded to the command, that all his men would be cut down if he did not retreat, and he gave the order to do so.

General Bragg was laboring under a great disadvantage in his attack upon the Federal left; for on his right was the ravine, flooded by the recent rains and the back water from the river. It was deep and not fordable, and he could not attack the extremity of the line. The gunboats Tyler and Lexington were sending enormous shells into the midst of his force whenever it could be done without detriment to the Union army. The fresh troops in this part of the field fought like heroes; and Hurlbut's division held their own, though the men had been fighting all day.

All these forces combined defeated General Bragg, and left the Union army on the field, though not on the ground they had occupied in the morning, for they had been driven a considerable distance toward Pittsburg Landing. As the sun went down upon the bloody battlefield, and the darkness concealed the carnage of one of the most desperate fights of the war, the field had been won by neither of the combatants, though the advantage was with the Confederates, who believed that they would complete the victory for their side on the following day.

All night long the gunboats threw their heavy shells into the camps of the enemy; and the roar of the guns, with another drenching rain, prevented the exhausted soldiers from obtaining the repose they so much needed. General Grant was anxious, to say the least, in regard to the situation; though he had a reasonable confidence in the result of the battle the next day, and he had good reason to do so, for General Buell's army was with him.

The enemy were not yet aware that the Army of the Ohio had arrived, though some of their

officers suspected that fresh troops had been brought into the first day's battle. General Grant, though somewhat disabled, went to the headquarters of every general on the field, and gave his orders personally for the next day; and it was midnight before he had completed his round of visits, and returned to the Landing, where he lay down on the wet ground, with his head on a stump for a pillow, and slept soundly till morning, not disturbed by the roar from the gunboats.

Deck camped with the first company that night, though they had no tents, nor anything to eat except what they carried in their haversacks. He had received several slight wounds in his encounter with the Confederate captain, which had been dressed by Dr. Farnwright. Captain Gordon had been brought to the camp of his company, if a mere resting-place deserved that name.

"How is the captain, Doctor?" asked Deck, when he obtained his first sight of the surgeon.

"He is badly wounded; but I think he will recover with proper care, which is almost im-

possible to give him in such a place as this, where he has not even a bed of straw to rest upon," replied the doctor. "But his men have done the best they could for him. They have made a tent on poles for him with their blankets, and gathered moss and dried grass for his bed."

"I saw him fall, and felt as though a ball had gone through my own heart; for Captain Gordon was my best friend outside of the family. I learned about everything I know of military affairs from him, and he has always been kind to me. Where is he wounded, Dr. Farnwright?" asked Deck.

"On the head; and the ball must have struck him on the skull over the left eye, and come diagonally from some point below him. But I think he will recover if he gets out of this place."

"Have you many other patients, Doctor?"

"I have had more than I could well care for; and some of them are in a very bad condition, and will die before morning."

"I suppose nothing is known yet who were killed, or left on the field," added Deck.

"You were present when the roll of the first company was called, Captain Lyon."

"Twenty-two were missing in the first," added Deck.

"And I have more than twice that number on the hospital list, though I don't think the count is correct. The second company have eighteen missing, but only twenty-six wounded, if the count is correct; for I have not had time to attend to these matters," replied the surgeon.

"Do you know anything about my father and brother?" Deck inquired.

"Neither of them is hurt, I think, for I have not been called to either; but Sandy Lyon, your cousin I believe, has a sabre-cut on his left shoulder. All the men are talking about you, Captain," added the surgeon with a smile. "They say you finished a captain of cavalry by leaping your horse upon him, as you did in the fight at the cross-roads."

"I was sorry for the captain, for he was a bright fellow; but he compelled me to kill him, for he did not move after he went down with his horse, and was dragged away by the animal,

with his foot caught in the stirrup," replied Deck.

"I think you need not apologize for it, Captain."

"I don't apologize for doing my duty, but I was sorry for the young man."

The surgeon had to return to his patients; and Deck was tired enough to think of his bed at Riverlawn, and even to wish for his couch of straw on the ground; but he did the best he could, and the blanket kept him warm. He slept as soundly as the chief of the army, for he did not wake till the trumpets were sounding in the morning.

Both armies were confident of victory on the second day. General A. S. Johnston, one of the bravest and most accomplished generals in the Confederate army, had fallen on the first day at about two o'clock in the afternoon; and he had been succeeded in the command by General Beauregard, who was so much elated by the advantage gained by his forces, that he felt sure of the victory the following day; and he telegraphed such messages to Richmond that Mr.

Davis issued a congratulatory message to the Confederate Congress, announcing the total defeat and rout of the army of General Grant.

Late in the evening General Nelson succeeded in bringing over the river the rest of his division. During the night Crittenden's and McCook's divisions were added to the force. By a series of misunderstandings, General Lew Wallace's division, which had been prevented from being present at the battle, came down from Crump's Landing; and he has been very unjustly blamed for his absence, when the fault was with his superiors.

General Buell placed the fourth division very near the spot where the Riverlawns had defeated the enemy's cavalry; though Major Lyon did not pride himself on this success, for he had fought the Confederates with two men to their one. At five o'clock on Monday morning Nelson's division was formed in line of battle nearest to the Tennessee, though the flooded ravine was between the troops and the river. All the artillery had been left at Savannah with the trains, on account of the impassable roads. On the right of

it was Crittenden's division, and a place was left for McCook's when it should arrive.

Nelson's division was ordered forward, and began the advance. The enemy's pickets were driven a mile by his skirmishers, evidently partaking in some degree of the impetuosity of the commander. General Buell ordered the fourth division to halt; for it was running away from Crittenden's, which came up with it after a little delay, and they went forward together.

The march of the two divisions soon brought the enemy down upon them, so that they were checked in their advance. Nelson sorely needed his artillery, which had been left on the other side of the river. For the want of this important arm, Nelson's command was compelled doggedly to fall back; but Crittenden had his artillery, and was better able to take care of his force. A battery from his division was sent to Nelson's assistance, when the forward movement of the enemy was checked.

The onslaught of Nelson's division soon assured General Beauregard that the junction of the Army of the Ohio with the Army of the

Tennessee had been effected, and he reported that he was satisfied that he was attacked by a largely superior force. When the line of battle of the Army of the Ohio, with the portion of McCook's division which had arrived, was formed, it was a mile and a half in length. Portions of this line advanced and retreated by turns, and the battle lasted till early in the afternoon.

The enemy had finally been forced back; but at two o'clock in the afternoon the repulse of the Confederates was complete, and before dark they were five miles south of the locality of General Grant's line on Sunday morning. What had been lost of ground on that day was much more than recovered on Monday. It has been quite impossible in the space available to give the details of all the movements in such a great battle as that of Pittsburg Landing.

At the close of the day the troops were too much exhausted by the two days' fighting of a large portion, or the one day's fighting of the rest with their long march previously, to pursue the retreating foe. In the morning Generals

Sherman and Wood, each with two brigades, and the Riverlawn Cavalry with the latter, were sent by General Grant to ascertain the position of the enemy if in camp, or to pursue them if in retreat.

It was discovered that General Beauregard had withdrawn his infantry and artillery beyond Lick Creek, leaving a large force of cavalry in his rear. General Sherman attacked this force, and for a while the Riverlawn battalion was in its element. The enemy was driven a considerable distance; but the pursuit was useless, and the generals returned with the foci to the camps.

Thus ended the great battle of Pittsburg Landing, or Shiloh as it is called in the South, in the defeat of the Confederates, even after their victory on this bloody field had been proclaimed in Richmond. After the loss of Mill Springs, Forts Henry and Donelson, the immense delight of the Secessionists there and elsewhere can readily be imagined. And so can the revulsion of feeling when the result of the second day's battle was carried on the wires to their rejoicing hearts.

In this severe battle the total loss of the com-

bined Union armies was twelve thousand one hundred and ninety. The loss of the Confederates was ten thousand six hundred and ninety-seven. The difference was not quite fifteen hundred against the loyal force. The stragglers were quite as numerous on one side as the other, and during the night those of the enemy plundered the deserted camps. "Cowardly citizens and rapacious soldiers were engaged alike in the wretched work," says a Southern history of the war, in venting its indignation at the outrages.

CHAPTER XXXIII

CAPTAIN LYON MAKES A SCOUTING-TOUR

THE State of Kentucky had distinguished itself in this great battle; and General Sherman, who was not only General Grant's "right-hand man," but one of the ablest officers the war produced, spoke in the highest terms of them: "Here I saw for the first time the well-ordered and compact Kentucky forces of General Buell, whose soldierly movement at once gave confidence to our newer and less disciplined forces." There were no stragglers from the Army of the Ohio.

In spite of the fact that a comparatively vast number of stragglers swarmed in the shelter of such places as they could find, most of the Army of the Tennessee fought bravely, and did not give way to panic on the field. A great deal of credit was awarded to the divisions of Nelson and Crittenden, not more deserved than belonged to the other divisions; but they de-

feated and routed the entire right of the Confederate force under General Bragg when he made his final effort to break the line.

Perhaps no battle of the war was projected with more substantial and far-reaching objective ends than the battle of Pittsburg Landing on the part of the Confederate generals. Its primary object was to crush Grant and the combined armies of the Tennessee and the Ohio; for this purpose attained, it was possible for the enemy to obtain a foothold in Kentucky, and the lead, for a time at least, in all the military movements in the great West. And the valiant troops of that vast region were fighting for their own firesides, like those from Kentucky; for the coveted line of Ohio, once obtained and fortified by the enemy, would have opened the prosperous States at the north of it, as far as the Canadian boundary, to the march and pillage of the Southern armies. It would have reduced them to the condition of the States to which the war was happily confined for four years.

There was a vast population in these States from which to draw soldiers for such an emer-

gency; but armies are not gathered and disciplined in a week or a month, as the experience at Pittsburg Landing, with nearly a fourth part of the army of the first day crouching as stragglers under the banks of the river amply demonstrates. It was the disciplined soldiers that saved the first day from being utterly a rout. The great enterprise of the Southern leaders was a failure, however rosy an appearance they tried to put upon the result.

General Halleck arrived at Pittsburg Landing April 11, and proceeded at once to concentrate the armies for the attack upon Corinth. Extensive fortifications were thrown up by both armies. The Union forces were greatly superior in numbers to the Confederates; and the soldiers were impatient to be led to the attack, and none more so than Nelson's division, now in better condition than at the battle farther down the river, for the artillery, which had been left at Savannah, was with the command.

The gaze of the whole nation was fixed upon the movements of the two great armies of the East and the West, one in the vicinity of Rich-

mond, and the other around Corinth. Both the Union and the Confederate armies had been largely re-enforced; and the result of the expected battles would be important, if not decisive. The crisis of the war was believed to be approaching by many, but it did not come till a year later.

General Beauregard sent forward large detachments towards Pittsburg to prevent the advance of any reconnoitring bodies, either large or small, and to retard the progress of the army on its march; and the cavalry of General Nelson's division found abundant occupation on the road. Captain Gordon was still in the hospital, though in a fair way to recover. After the battle everything possible was done for the wounded, and they were made tolerably comfortable.

Captain Lyon was still retained in command of the first company of the Riverlawns, though he protested to General Woodbine that the command ought to be given to Tom Belthorpe. He and the first lieutenant were fast friends, and on excellent terms with each other; and Tom insisted that he should be happier to have Deck at the head of the company, rather than be in

this position himself. But it was hoped and expected that Captain Gordon would soon be in condition to resume the command.

The enemy were well provided with cavalry; and when General Woodbine was moving his brigade to the south, his three companies were very useful to him. The horses as well as the riders had suffered a great deal in the terrible experience of the battle-days, especially when it had not been possible to bring forage for them across the river, though this had only been a temporary matter. Deck gave his personal attention to Ceph in such straits as this, and sometimes gave him "hardtack" from his own haversack.

General Halleck, who certainly had more tact at organizing an army than he had for fighting, had divided his vast army of one hundred and forty thousand men into five grand divisions, — the right wing, the left wing, the centre, the cavalry, and the reserves. The fourth division, of which General Woodbine's brigade was still a portion, belonged to the centre. The main body of the cavalry formed a grand division by itself;

but those brigades which had detachments less than a regiment retained them.

These grand divisions were sent by different routes, and roads where there were any, though they were not worth mentioning. General Nelson proceeded first to Hamburg, about ten miles south of Pittsburg, and on the river. From this point he turned to the south-west, and later to the south, passing an unsurveyed region, where the brigade of General Woodbine halted to fill their canteens at Waldron's Creek. This was on the second day of the march; for there was no emergency, and even the impetuous general did not hurry the troops over the muddy route.

"It seems to me that I can hear the sound of horses' feet ahead," said Lieutenant Herndon, who had carried forward the order to halt, and there met Captain Lyon. "Did you hear anything, Deck?"

"I have not noticed any unusual sounds," replied the captain, as he started his horse forward to investigate the matter, and Herndon went with him.

"I should say that Beauregard had a nice time

in sending his detachments forward through all these by-roads; for I doubt if there is a regular highway anywhere in this region," said the lieutenant, when they halted about ten rods beyond the main body.

"I hear something now," added Deck. "Hurry up, Frank, and we will see if we can find it;" and he started his steed at full gallop.

But they had not gone fifty rods when Deck called for a halt near a bend in the road which shut off their view beyond it.

"I am sure now that I heard the sound of a horse's feet, and something like the rattle of equipments," said Deck, as he started Ceph at a walk to obtain a sight of the horseman, if there was any, at the turn of the route.

"That's plain enough now," added Frank. "I see them now! There are two cavalymen, hurrying their horses to the utmost. There is something up along this miserable road."

Deck obtained a sight of the cavalymen almost at the same moment, and then they disappeared behind another bend.

"There is a force ahead of us somewhere, and

those two men are scouts looking for an enemy in this direction," said he, starting Ceph again at a gallop, and riding till he came to the next bend, halting just before he reached it.

The scouts disappeared again just before they came to it. Scouts had been sent out ahead of the brigade; but they had halted at the creek to fill their canteens, for the day was very warm for the season to those with Northern blood in their veins, and they were very thirsty. Their halt had suggested the same idea to the troops behind them. But the captain thought they were getting too far away from the brigade for their own safety; though it seemed to be his duty to inform himself of the nature of the force ahead, if there was one.

Again he rode forward at full speed to the next bend, and took an observation as before. This time he discovered nearly half a mile ahead, on a piece of straight road, a cavalry force approaching him. It extended a considerable distance; but he could not determine the number, though it looked like a whole company.

"There they are!" exclaimed Deck, as he

pointed down the road. "I think you had better return to the head of the column, Frank, and inform the general that there is a force in front of us."

"Just as you say, Captain Lyon; but I might help you in looking this thing up," replied the lieutenant.

"I don't need any help, Frank; and the general will be wondering what has become of us. I wish you would go back, and explain to him why we came so far," added Deck.

"All right; I will do so," and he rode off at an easy pace; but he turned back at the bend, and joined the captain.

"Six scouts are coming, but they are not hurrying," said he.

"Order them to walk their horses, and halt when they come to the next bend," said Captain Lyon.

"I will hang my handkerchief on a bush at the point where they are to halt," replied Frank, as he rode off again.

The captain dismounted, and left his steed at the bend, knowing that Ceph would stand there

all day if he did not come to him. Then he walked cautiously to the turn of the road, and waited till the two scouts came to the head of the column, when it halted. The force had come considerably nearer to him while the scouts were approaching. He was satisfied now that it consisted of a full company. It halted while the scouts made their report.

As stated before, the brigade was moving along an unsurveyed tract of country. The road was bordered by a piece of woods, extending into the "desert," as some of the officers called it; though it was not a proper name for it, for Chambers' and Waldron's Creeks extended nearly across it, and then united to form a larger stream. From the views obtained of it through the woods, it looked like a soft place, especially near the water-courses.

Beyond the "desert," on the main road, there was a hamlet of half a dozen houses, though shanties would have been a better name for them; and beyond this was a cross-road turning to the south-east and the opposite point, with a cotton-press at the farther corner. The whole

region was mostly covered with forests, or with scattered trees, having a considerable number of small or large tracts where the wood had been cut off, and the land cultivated in cotton, the dry stalks of which were still standing in many of them.

The bend at which Deck was standing after the departure of the lieutenant commanded a full view of the locality just described, the cotton-press being the boundary of his vision. He was watching to see what the company intended to do at this place; for they need not have halted on the report of the scouts, as they could attack the column as well in one locality as another.

But he was not required to halt long before a movement engaged his attention. The force was moving towards him; and he was all ready to retreat to his horse, and ride to the head of the brigade column. But the company did not come far before a part of it turned around and marched back. He saw the head of it turn to the left into the road to the south-east, but only one-half of it went this way; the second platoon

turned to the right, for the road mentioned extended across the one on which the brigade was moving.

It was clear enough to the captain that a surprise had been planned by the captain of the company; and that he intended to take the head of the approaching column on both flanks, and cut the men down, or make prisoners of them. He was in no hurry; for he was confident the enemy would wait for the brigade in the positions they had chosen, and he rode slowly. He recalled an opening he had noticed before; and when he came to it he halted, and looked at a map of the country he carried with him. It was not a topographical map, and the path in the woods was not laid down on it; but he decided to see to what the road would lead him. It was not more than a quarter of a mile to the open country, and he halted there.

The road to the south-east appeared on the map, and he could see it from the place where he stopped. The path bore to the right; and there were ruts and the footprints of horses in it, showing that vehicles of some kind passed

this way. On the road to the south of him, where the first platoon had turned in, he discovered a hamlet; and he concluded that the path was only a short cut from one road to the other. He had made up his mind what to do with his company if permitted, and he rode back at full speed to the head of the column.

CHAPTER XXXIV

A HEAVY SKIRMISH ON THE ROAD

CAPTAIN LYON had left the scouts on the road to watch the enemy, ordering the sergeant in command of them not to go any nearer to the cross-roads, at which was the hamlet dignified on the map by the name of "Roland," though this was the name of a person living there, and to hasten back to the column if there was any movement to advance.

"I was afraid you had fallen into the hands of the enemy," said General Woodbine, who was one of the group of officers gathered in front of the first company.

"I don't do that sort of think as a rule, General," replied Deck, as he took his map from his cap, where he carried it. "I felt obliged to remain long enough to ascertain what the enemy were doing, for their movements were a little suspicious."

"Well, what were they doing?" asked the commander.

"The force consists of only one company of cavalry; but the captain of it appears to have a vein of strategy in his brain, and he has set a very comfortable trap for us to fall into if we are so obliging as to accommodate him in this way," replied Deck, as he spread out his map.

He proceeded to explain the situation of the enemy near the cross-roads into which they had turned.

"You have looked the ground over, Captain; and, as it is to be a cavalry affair, I will turn the matter over to Major Lyon, and you may consult with him about it," said the general, as he turned his horse, and rode back to the infantry column, perhaps to prepare that arm of the service to support the cavalry if needed.

"Well, Captain Lyon, you seem to be in command here, and I suppose I am of no use," said Major Lyon, as his son approached him.

"No, father!" protested Deck. "Have I been too presumptuous?" asked Deck, rather taken aback by the implied rebuke of the major.

"I did not say that, or hint it, Dexter," replied the parent. "You are too sensitive, my son."

"I have simply reported the facts as I found them; and I did not make a suggestion of any kind to the general," answered Deck.

"But he sent you to me for consultation," added the major, with a smile.

"You command the three companies of cavalry, and he intimated that this affair was to be settled by your arm."

"We must not stop to discuss it, or the enemy may be upon us. What do you advise, Captain Lyon?" asked the major.

"I don't advise anything, Major Lyon," replied Deck, with a smile, for he was not angry; but he had always been very careful not to offer any advice to a superior officer unless he was asked for it.

"You need not be so sensitive, Dexter. I asked your advice, as I should have asked Captain Truman's. You have looked the ground over, and you know better than anybody else what is best to be done," added the major. "Let me see your plan, Dexter."

Deck took the map from his cap, and briefly explained the situation.

"I am not in command of the battalion, Major Lyon; but if I were, I should send the first company in at this road through the woods, and direct them to march over to the south-east road to Patterson's, as it is called on the map, where I think they cannot be seen by the enemy through the woods. But this should not be the first movement."

"What would be your first movement?" asked the major, evidently interested in his son's strategy.

"I should send the Marions forward by the road we are on, the second platoon in two parts, one-half on each side of the road; for the woods are not dense, and the horses can readily pass between the trees."

"Is the second company to remain out of the fight?"

"Not at all; the second company should follow the Marions, for they will form a thin line, and be a reserve to act where they happen to be the most needed."

"But you have not told me what the first company is to do on the cross-road or at Patterson's," suggested the commander of the battalion.

"The first company is not to do anything at Patterson's, but are to hasten up the south-east road, and fall upon the enemy in the rear or on the flank, as the case may be. I have given you all my ideas, Major; and now I will obey your orders, whatever they may be," Deck concluded, saluting his superior officer.

Major Lyon looked upon the ground, then pursed up his lips, as he was in the habit of doing when he was thinking; and he spoke, having evidently reached a conclusion. He had judged the plan by its own merits, as he always did, for his mind and his judgment were of a judicial cast.

"I have no better plan than yours, Captain Lyon, and therefore I shall adopt it; indeed, I think it is better than anything I could bring forward at present. The Marions are to march first, I understand you?" added the chief of battalion.

"Yes, sir; and the sooner the better," replied Deck.

Artie had been standing near his father through all his conversation, and had been greatly interested in it. Major Lyon was proceeding to detail the orders for Captain Richland, the captain of the third company, when the young man interposed.

“I have heard all that Captain Lyon has said, and I understand the orders perfectly;” and he repeated them correctly.

“Right, Artie; now carry them to Captain Richland as fast as you can go,” added the major.

He went off like a rocket; and in a few minutes the company had passed the others, and reached the front. The captain then arranged his men in conformity with the order, and had about twenty-five men on each flank. The troopers were to use their carbines first, and then the sabres for the charge. They were told to move at a walk till they could see the hamlet, and then to march at a gallop, in order to give the first company time to reach the south-east road.

“Attention — company!” shouted Deck, placing himself at the front. “Gallop — march!”

and he gave the rein to Ceph, with his signal to go.

He did go with a vengeance, and he seemed to be perfectly aware that there was business at hand. The captain soon came up with the Marions, and saw that they were making good progress, on the flanks as well as in the road. The trees were at least six feet apart, and often more distant. As soon as he saw the cross-path or road, he turned into it. The trees were about as sparsely scattered as at the side of the road; but a breadth of a quarter of a mile of them was enough to conceal his force from those who were posted on the south-east road. As he approached Patterson's, he diminished his own speed, and ordered the command to trot.

Around the hamlet, for it was nothing more, some of the land was under cultivation; and he halted the company, fearful that his force might be revealed to the enemy, for he desired that the Confederate company should engage the Marions before his presence was known.

"Lieutenant Knox!" Deck called, when he saw the tall Kentuckian on the left of his platoon.

Life dashed forward as though he had been struck by the sabre of his friend and favorite. He rode up to the acting captain, and saluted him without a word.

"I want you to scout in the direction of the road that passes through that little collection of houses," said Deck, pointing with his sabre in the direction of the highway.

Life saluted again, and then dashed off.

"Halt!" cried Deck. "Don't let them see you; and if you find any person moving up that road, stop him, if you have to do it with your carbine!"

Life was the best scout in the squadron, which was the reason the captain had called him. He took all the precautions that were necessary, and seemed to do so by instinct; for he had been a trapper and hunter over much of the territory between the Mississippi and the Pacific Ocean, fighting wild Indians, and incurring all the perils of the wilderness, and his optic and auditory nerves had been cultivated to their highest powers.

He obtained a sight of the company, or platoon,

posted there; but it was not necessary for him to exercise any of his woodcraft further, for he had scarcely discovered the force before the Confederate yell rang out on the still air. This was their war-cry, and it meant that they were rushing forward to battle; and Life galloped back with all the speed of his powerful steed.

Before he was seen, Deck gave the order to march at a gallop, and dashed by the shortest cut to the road. In two minutes or less he reached the cotton-press, where he could see the combat going on in front of him. The first platoon of the enemy struck the head of Captain Richland's column, but not till at least a dozen of the enemy had fallen, or fled to the woods, where they were confronted by the two flanking parties. The second platoon of the enemy had moved forward on the west side of the road; but when they came forward they were confronted by the twenty-five men on that side of the road. Major Lyon saw this, and ordered Captain Truman of the reserve in the rear to hasten to the west side of the road. The platoon of the enemy in that locality were then

outnumbered, and realized almost at the beginning of the fight that they were beaten. They fled farther into the forest, unwilling to throw away their lives in a useless struggle.

But the main body of the enemy in the road continued to conduct themselves with the bravery of desperation, even when they saw that they had fallen into an ugly trap. Deck's company cheered lustily when they discovered them, as they had on the field of Pittsburg Landing; and, after firing their carbines, they charged with the fury of madmen; and the enemy began to fall from their horses, dead or wounded, to the ground, where they were trampled upon by the horses.

The struggle lasted but two or three minutes, and it looked then as though the Confederates had lost half their men. The captain had been cheering on his men when first seen, and fought like a hero himself; but when he saw a whole company of blue uniforms in his rear, charging furiously into his command, he shouted "Quarter!" at the top of his lungs. Stufton, the bugler, was near the captain of the first company;

and he was ordered to sound the recall. Not another shot was fired, not another blow was struck; and Deck moved forward to meet the valiant commander of the company. He thought he had seen him before; and when he came nearer to him he recognized the gallant lieutenant wounded at the battle of the Cross-Roads in Kentucky when he was in the Texan cavalry.

"How do you do, Captain Makepeace," said Captain Lyon, extending his hand to him.

"I have seen you before, but I cannot quite make out who you are," said the Confederate, gazing intently into his brown face.

"You were badly wounded at what we call the Battle of the Cross-Roads," Deck explained.

"I was badly wounded, and I have hardly got over it yet. Are you the young officer that did it?" the captain inquired, as his memory seemed to come back to him.

"I am," replied Deck.

"Then, I can only say that you are an awful fellow in a fight, and your horse is another," added Captain Makepeace, with a smile, as he grasped Deck's hand again. "I was a prisoner

in the hospital, and I was moved down to Riverlawn when your squadron went away from the cross-roads. I can only say that I was treated as though I had been a good friend, and not an enemy. I am glad to see you, Deck, for that is what they called you then."

"And do now when not on duty; but I am no longer a lieutenant, for I was a second then. I am now a captain on the staff of the general of my brigade," added Deck.

"And you will be a major-general if this cruel war lasts much longer."

"Thank you, Captain Makepeace; I am higher in rank now than I ought to be. Here comes my father."

Major Lyon had already given the order for the men to take care of the wounded, and Dr. Farnwright was at work upon them. The slaughter in the ranks of the enemy had been terrible, and six had been killed and twice as many wounded in the Union force. He recognized the captain of the Confederate company, but he had not much to say to him at this time. He had sent Artie Lyon back to report the re-

sult of the fight to General Woodbine, requesting to know what should be done with the prisoners.

The order came back to parole the prisoners, wounded or not, and establish a hospital for the wounded. This was done, the Union wounded were put on the wagons when they came up, and the march was resumed.

CHAPTER XXXV

A CONCEALED FORCE UNDER THE RIDGE

THE right and left wings and the centre of General Halleck's grand army came to the front of Corinth at the several positions, or very near them, which they were to occupy. General Beauregard had been re-enforced by the troops of Van Dorn and Price from farther west; and on a slight elevation, in the shape of one side of a long ellipse, extensive intrenchments had been constructed. On similar elevations, overlapping the works of the enemy, and reaching farther to the north, General Halleck caused his fortifications to be erected. Between them flowed Phillips Creek and Bridge Creek.

Outside of the works on both sides, batteries were planted on convenient elevations, which either enemy could use to annoy or repulse the other in case of attack. Most of the country was covered with woods or solitary trees, with

portions of the ground cleared off and under cultivation. General Halleck carefully avoided a general battle, either on provocation or invitation, but began his operations by regular approaches with parallels; in fact, as he would have besieged a strongly built fortress upon which he was to bestow weeks and months of the most laborious effort.

Step by step, and by slow advances, he moved his works forward, securing each new position by fortifying it. The grand army seemed to consist of so many "pick and shovel" brigades. General Grant was second in command, but ignored, and practically in disgrace, so that he had no hand in the operations in progress. It may be interesting to contemplate what he would have done if he had been in command of this grand army; but one may be confident that the approach to the other grand army would have been entirely different, and that a whole month would not have been spent in the use of the pick and shovel, though it is possible that he might have been checked, as he was in the advance upon Richmond.

General Beauregard resisted these advances with stubborn resolution and with augmented forces, but he was as careful to avoid a general battle as the prudent commander on the other side. General Halleck advanced his entire line five times during the month. All these movements involved heavy skirmishing, but both generals still avoided anything like a pitched battle.

General Nelson's division was posted near Bridge Creek, which was an insignificant stream, whose especial mission seemed to be to produce mud in some localities. At times there were some very sharp encounters, sometimes initiated by one side, and sometimes by the other. Between the two creeks, flowing through the lower ground, there was a considerable elevation for that region; though there is nothing that can be called a mountain in the entire State of Mississippi, or even that could be called a hill in the more northern or eastern parts of the country.

Early one morning, near the last of the month of May, as the daylight began to bring the elevation into view, the sentinels of General Nel-

son's division discovered evidences that assured them a force was advancing behind the elevation. The fact was reported at headquarters in the centre of the line, and the cavalry battalion was ordered out, as well as the entire division; and both arms were soon ready for the conflict, which was supposed to be such as had frequently occurred before during several weeks.

The order to reconnoitre in front of the works was carried to Major Lyon by Lieutenant Hern-don, and Captain Lyon bore one to Captain Batterson. Deck still attended to his duties on the staff, and was quartered with the brigadier. Captain Gordon was still an invalid in the hospital established at Savannah. In the engagements that had occurred thus far, Captain Lyon had been placed in command of the first company, but he had never taken this position unless specially assigned to it on each occasion; but no order had been given him for this reconnaissance.

"Why are you here, Captain Lyon?" demanded the general when he returned from the camp of the battery.

"I have delivered your order to Captain Batterson, General," replied Deck.

"But why are you not at the head of the first company of the Riverlawns?" continued the commander of the brigade, looking at the young officer as though he was surprised to find him where he was.

"Because I have not been ordered to the command of it, in the first place, and in the second, because Lieutenant Belthorpe, the first in the company, is a very competent officer," replied Deck.

"I admit the competency of Lieutenant Belthorpe; but at the present, after taking a long look at the line, I especially wish you to command the first company," added the commander.

"I have nothing more to say," answered the captain, as he rode off on the road to Corinth, which passed through the camp.

"If your father were not in command of the battalion, I should place Captain Lyon in that position," added the general; but Deck was too far off to hear it, and it was well that he did not.

It is more than possible that the commander of the brigade had formed an extravagant opinion of the ability of the young officer; though he generally had some basis for his view, for he had employed him in several important enterprises. Deck went on his way to the road where the battalion was forming, wishing that the general had permitted Tom Belthorpe to command the company instead of himself.

It was a time for hurry, and though Deck was not exactly pleased with what had just happened, he could not be remiss in the discharge of his duty, whatever it was; and if he had been called upon to use a pick and shovel, he would not have grumbled. He had looked out upon the elevation behind which the enemy were reported to be concealed, and his active brain had taken in the situation almost at a glance. He had made up his mind what ought to be done; but his father was in command of the force, and he did not presume to advise him.

As Captain Lyon came to the head of the column, he could see his welcome in the faces of the men turned towards him. The third com-

pany was just getting into line, and there was a momentary pause in the movement. Deck went to the place at the head of the column where his father was waiting, and saluted him.

"I am ordered by General Woodbine to take command of the first company, though I was very sorry to receive the order," said Deck.

"Why were you sorry, Dexter?" asked his father, whose surprise was apparent upon his face, as the son's regret was upon his own.

"Because I would rather see Lieutenant Belthorpe in that position."

"We must not bring our likes and dislikes into the service ; and every officer should do his duty faithfully wherever he is placed by his superior," replied the major.

"I am ready to do mine, Major," added Deck, as he looked again down the road.

"Then you will cross your company by the bridge, and lead them over to the hill ; while the second company will ford the creek at the left, and the third at the right," continued the chief of battalion, repeating the orders he had already given to the captains. "Forward — march !"

Deck obeyed the order at a gallop, while the major passed to the side of the road till the second company came up. But he had no more than reached the bridge when the major on his blood horse overtook him, and directed him to halt when he reached the ascent of the hill, in order to enable the other companies to get into position. The ridge, as the elevation was generally called, was a mile in length; and the entire field of operations extended nearly twelve miles north and south, and more than half that from east to west.

“You have chosen just the plan I had in my head when I had taken in the situation, Major,” said Deck, when he halted his command.

“It does not seem to me that there is any other way to arrange it,” replied the father. “A part of General Thomas W. Sherman’s intrenchments command the ridge; but I don’t think his guns can be brought to bear upon the enemy, though that bastion is in his line on the height.”

“But even from its salient angle, unless the gun can send a ball around a corner, the enemy

could not be disturbed if they keep close to the hill," replied Deck with a smile.

"It is hardly prudent to mount the hill."

"Not at this moment, but we must know what there is on the other side of it. With your permission I will send Lieutenant Knox to the top of it, for he is a very skilful scout."

"I assent to that," added the major; and Life was summoned by Artie.

"We want to know what there is on the other side of this ridge, Lieutenant," said Deck, as soon as he came forward.

"I will scout it on foot, then," he replied, as he dismounted, and handed the bridle-rein to the orderly.

"Call for any assistance you want," added the captain.

He asked for Sergeant Fronklyn and Corporal Milton, and the three ascended the ridge together on foot. As they reached the top of it, they lay down, and crawled forward like so many snakes, till they could see down the steep slope on the farther side. Close to the succession of knolls that formed the ridge, they discovered the

enemy, consisting of two batteries, two companies of cavalry, and a regiment of infantry, at least fourteen hundred men.

The lieutenant sent Milton down to report, as hastily as possible, to the major, the information already obtained; while he remained with Fronklyn to watch the enemy, for it was evident to the Kentuckian that some unusually large movement was in progress. The major, on the receipt of this report, immediately sent a note in pencil by his orderly to General Woodbine, and two men, one to each end of the ridge, to delay the two companies he had sent out before.

The pencilled note brought the commander of the brigade to the front at once, and behind him thundered Captain Batterson's battery; and behind it came two regiments of infantry on the double-quick. The general had hardly reached the position of the major at the head of the first company before Sergeant Fronklyn came leaping down the declivity like a gazelle or a mountain goat, with the report that a large force of the enemy had just issued from the intrenchments opposite, near the line of the Railroad.

Life Knox had crawled about a mile on the ground, with nearly the speed of the fastest snake in the world, to the highest point on the ridge at its northern extremity, and the head of the force could be seen from his first position. It was more than ever evident that an operation of more than usual magnitude had been begun by the Confederates. The force sent in the darkness of the early morning must have come out of the intrenchments on the Corinth road, and had probably waded Phillips Creek, which had high banks that would conceal the men, and had left it when the troops reached the shelter of the ridge.

It could not be understood how the heavy force burrowing behind the ridge could have reached this locality in any other way, without attracting the attention of the watchful sentinels in front of the intrenchments of Nelson and Crittenden. But the approaching enemy had a march of nearly two miles before them before they could unite with the force under the ridge. The general had not fairly considered the situation, when Lieutenant Knox came like the rapid serpent down the steep,

and rushed to the commander of brigade as soon as he discovered him.

"I hope you will excuse me, General, if I speak right out," were the first words that gushed from the stalwart lieutenant's mouth.

"Speak, man! No compliments or excuses!" replied the commander, more excited than Deck had ever seen him before.

"The artillery on this ridge can rake the enemy under the hill, and use up every mother's son of them!" Life belched forth in a loud and gushing tone. "The force on the other side of the ridge must be beaten before the enemy in the distance can get here!"

"Captain Lyon, march your first company up this hill. Lieutenant Herndon, order up Captain Batterson's battery! You have halted the second and third companies at the ends of the ridge, Major Lyon; send orders to them to engage the enemy at once," said General Woodbine, so decidedly that all who heard him realized that he knew what he was about.

As soon as the messengers had departed, he rode up the ridge himself, attended by the major

and the remaining staff-officer of the former. Lieutenant Herndon had returned, closely followed by the artillery. The general had selected the most available path for the battery, and then sent Herndon to be its guide up the steep. It was a hard passage, and the horses had all they could do to haul the guns and caissons up the slope.

The commander had also, as soon as he reached the summit of the hill, selected a path for the descent of a company of cavalry; and he ordered the captain of the first company to go down, and to engage the enemy there without a moment's delay, as he saw the approach of the heavy force in the distance.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE LAST ENGAGEMENT AT CORINTH

CAPTAIN LYON spoke a few inspiring words to the company, and then dashed down the slope ; but he looked before he leaped. The elevation was a series of low hills ; and the side next to Phillips Creek was not a precipice, not a head-long steep, but a very rough descent of great height. It was nothing like the Horseneck, which Putnam went down in the Revolution, though there was one place with an abrupt fall of about three feet.

Deck had carefully observed and studied the force below. The two companies of cavalry were at the right and left of the lane ; the batteries were next to them ; and the infantry were in the centre of the line, and directly below the path of descent which the general had indicated. It was therefore this arm of the service that the young officer was to encounter.

As they kept well back, the enemy below could not see the force on the ridge. General Woodbine had been more alive and active than the officers had ever seen him before. The space available for the manœuvres of the troops on the elevation was generally nearly a quarter of a mile in width, with a full half-mile in one place. He had stationed the guns in four different places, at as many indentations of the slope, where projecting angles served as so many bastions. The guns were pointed at a sharp angle with the length of the ridge.

Major Lyon had signalled the second and third companies of his force to engage the enemy at either end of the ridge; but Captain Batterson had fired all his guns, loaded with canister, into the mounted force, and many men were seen to drop from their horses, the discharge producing no little confusion in their ranks. The two companies of cavalry then charged upon the enemy, and the fight was as severe as had ever been seen by the observers.

Four shells from the guns followed the canister, sent fairly into the midst of the infantry;

and in this moment of confusion and terror, Captain Lyon led the advance of the first company down the slope. The abrupt fall was at the foot of the descent; and Ceph, at the head of the column, made a long leap into a section of the infantry crouching under the hill to escape the destructive shells. The engagement then raged all along the line.

The horses of Deck's command had all been trained to the kind of work now required of them; and most of them came from the fine stock of Major Lyon, whose plantation was largely devoted to the raising of valuable animals. They were intelligent creatures; and when Ceph led the way they did not hesitate to follow him. The men had no opportunity to use their carbines to advantage in the descent, as their horses and the safety of their persons demanded all their attention; but as soon as they plunged into the midst of the infantry they drew their revolvers, and used them rapidly as the soldiers scattered from the effect of the shell that had exploded among them.

The enemy's officers were brave men, and they

did their best to rally the men, and with success in some instances; but most of the force ran away in the direction of the creek. But for them this was "out of the frying-pan into the fire," for a fire from the bastion in the line of General T. W. Sherman was opened upon them. It was not more than forty rods to the stream, and they leaped into it in hot haste.

But the officers of the two companies on the left, which had been out of reach of the terrible shell, rallied their men, and placed them in position to resist cavalry, when they had fired a volley, before which several of the Riverlawns went down. Deck then manœuvred his men, and moved them out into the open space between the ridge and the creek. Two shells from the battery on the elevation were dropped into the midst of the infantry, and threw them into another panic.

While they were in this condition Deck charged upon them. The horses had been especially trained in this manœuvre, for bayonets are an ugly weapon to confront: but the captain wielded his sabre with tremendous power; and

the infantry could not stand up against the leaping, rearing, and plunging horses, and they were cut down and overridden till they were forced back.

Deck managed to keep inside of them, near the ridge; and when the enemy retreated by command of their officers, the guns from Sherman's bastion raked them, and they were compelled to retire into or over the creek. The heavy force that came out of the Confederate intrenchments near the railroad advanced with all the speed they could command; and a tremendous roar of cannon came from the Union line of works, before which it presently began to wither. At the same time the enemy's fire opened all along their line, over the heads of the infantry, apparently directed at the bastion at the angle of the Federal works; for it was doing a great deal of mischief when the gunners could discharge the pieces without endangering the cavalry.

Deck had worked his command as close as he could to the ridge, to afford the heavier artillery of the bastion an opportunity to do its

work. This raking was too much for the infantry or the cavalry of the enemy; for Captains Truman and Richland had kept their commands as near the ridge as possible, so that Batterson's battery on the elevation could work the guns, as well as the main line of the intrenchments.

For some reason which the observers on the Union side could not then comprehend, though they understood it later, the advancing force beyond the creek suddenly wheeled about, and retreated to the point from which they left the intrenchments, disappearing from the view of the anxious watchers. When this was done, the force near the ridge followed their example, retreating to the Corinth road, and passing into the town.

The cavalry companies pursued them till they were exposed to the fire of the Confederate works, when they retired. In half an hour all was quiet along both lines. General Woodbine had sent for a battalion of infantry, and set them at work in bearing the wounded from the field to the hospital in the rear; and the enemy were magnanimous enough not to fire upon

them, as they descended to the field without arms.

This was on the 28th of May, and the two armies had been facing each other the entire month. The engagement that occurred this day was the most severe that had occurred near Corinth. The Federal lines had been pushed forward till General Halleck was nearly ready to surround the enemy; and it had become necessary for General Beauregard to bring on a general battle, or retreat from his position.

He chose the latter alternative; and while he was making this demonstration, though the larger force that came out of his line was intending to recapture a position on the right wing, he was actually sending away his provisions and military stores by the roads to the south and west of Corinth, in preparation for the abandonment of his position. He regretted the necessity of leaving Corinth, for it was a strong place as fortified; but he was unwilling to stand a regular siege there, and hoped to compensate himself for the loss of it by other advantages he saw for the future.

Early on the morning of May 30, repeated ex-

plosions in Corinth revealed the fact that the commander of the Confederate army had already left his intrenchments, or was then doing so. A reconnaissance verified the truth of the suppositions that the enemy had withdrawn. The left wing of the Union army, forty thousand in number, moved in pursuit; and four divisions of the centre followed to render such support as might be needed. Though the railroad had been seriously damaged, General Beauregard followed it south till he came to Okolona, seventy miles distant from Corinth, where he halted, almost surrounded by swamps and lagoons. Though the national cavalry under General Granger pursued him about thirty miles, they were unable to come up with the rear guard of the retreating army. Thus the campaign of Corinth ended without a completed siege or a general engagement.

It would be quite impossible to trace the army movements in Tennessee during the season that followed. General Halleck had no single object upon which to employ his grand army, and it was resolved into its former elements. The force, either as armies or divisions, were sent

where they were most needed. General Beauregard was succeeded by General Bragg, and the Federal commanders were somewhat divided in opinion as to what the latter intended to do. The Confederate army was also cut up in like manner.

Chattanooga was a very important point, and this and East Tennessee engaged the attention of the generals on both sides. The division of General Nelson remained a fortnight longer in the vicinity of Corinth, and was then set at work in repairing the railroad. The cavalry had employment in protecting the bridge-builders, and a false rumor that the fourth division was attacked caused a delay in forward movements.

The advance was resumed; and the army crossed at Florence and Decatur, and proceeded to Athens, Tennessee. Supplies fell short; and the cavalry was employed to collect food, so far as the poverty of the country would permit. This town became a depot for supplies, and General Nelson was ordered to assist in repairing the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad. He was then sent to MacMinville, seventy miles from

Athens. Thus the division was moved about until the middle of August, when General Nelson was superseded by General Wright.

The extensive raid of Morgan had greatly alarmed the citizens of Kentucky; and the fiery general was sent back to his native State, to organize fresh troops for its defence. Later the situation in Kentucky became critical. The Confederate raider had gone through the State, destroying vast amounts of United States property, and capturing towns; and it was believed that both General Bragg and Kirby Smith were moving towards it.

In this emergency Major Lyon was made a lieutenant-colonel, and placed in command of the three companies of cavalry and the battery, and marched to Kentucky. General Woodbine's brigade was increased by the addition of other companies of infantry, and he was ordered to remain at MacMinville. Captain Lyon regretted greatly to part with Lieutenant Herndon, for they had become fast friends.

Colonel Lyon and all his command regretted to leave the brigade of General Woodbine, who

had always been their strong friend; and they only hoped they should fall into his command again. The colonel's force marched by the most direct route to Bowling Green, keeping to the eastward of Nashville, and going by the way of Gallatin. The command was to report their arrival at Munfordville. It left Bowling Green in the forenoon, and towards night it came to the bridge over the Green River.

Colonel Lyon decided to encamp for the night on the lawn by the stream. He was at his home at Riverlawn, and he might as well spend the night there as elsewhere. After the camp had been laid out, and the tents pitched, the people of the vicinity gathered around it; but the sentinels would not permit them to pass. The companies looked soiled and tattered compared with their former appearance in their new uniforms, and the horses were rather thin in flesh.

"Whose command is this?" asked a stout man of fifty or more, who was confronted by the sentinel.

"Colonel Lyon's, from Corinth and Athens."

“Colonel Lyon!” exclaimed the visitor. “I know a Major Lyon, who owns this plantation.”

“He was lately promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, and two companies are called the Riverlawn Cavalry,” added the trooper.

“By all that is great and mighty, it is the major!” exclaimed the man. “I must see him!”

“No one can pass without permission; but here comes the colonel, and you can see him here.”

The commander of the force hurried his steps.

“Levi Bedford!” cried Colonel Lyon, as he rushed forward, and grasped the hand of the overseer. “How are they all at the mansion?” asked the soldier, who had not heard from his family for a considerable length of time.

“All well and hearty, and not one of them has been sick a day since you went away,” replied Levi Bedford, still holding the hand of his employer.

“And the boys?”

“All hearty; but I am sorry to say that old Dummy the preacher passed away two weeks

ago yesterday. We didn't know what this force was, and I reckon the folks don't know you are here. But how is Deck?"

"In excellent health, and Captain Lyon will be glad to see his mother and sisters."

"Who's Captain Lyon?" asked the overseer blankly.

"Dexter," replied his father.

"Good gracious! Deck a captain! What's Artie?"

"Nothing but a private; but he is my orderly, and has behaved quite as well as his brother."

Deck and Artie and Corporal Sandy Lyon came along then, and they all went to the mansion together. There was no end of hugging, kissing, and hand-shaking, which lasted quite half an hour. They were all amazed that the father was a lieutenant-colonel, and the son a captain. They took their supper in the mansion, and Diana (not Dinah) and the two quad-roon girls were as glad to see them as the members of the family.

After supper the fifty negroes, men and wo-

men and children, gathered in front of the house by the light of a bonfire, and welcomed the return of Mars'r and his two sons. The colonel and the captain both took them all by the hand, and they were blessed up to the seventh heaven by the dusky crowd. While this ceremony was in progress, Lieutenant Tom Belthorpe presented himself on the lawn, and wanted Deck to go home with him. There was a mighty attraction at Colonel Belthorpe's mansion for him; and Frank, the coachman, drove them over in the road-wagon.

Of course the family were all delighted to see the returned son, and Kate blushed like a June rose when she took Deck's hand; and after her sister Margie had kissed the young captain, she ventured to follow her example. A couple of hours were passed very pleasantly, in an ecstasy by Deck; but then they had to return to the camp.

The next morning the march was resumed to their destination; and here we must leave them for a time, for there were stirring times for the command. Their experience will be related in

another volume; and those who are interested in Deck, his father, his brother, and others who have been introduced, will find a continuation of their patriotic work in the succeeding book, the fifth, and last but one, of the series, entitled "AT THE FRONT."

OLIVER OPTIC'S BOOKS

ALL-OVER-THE-WORLD LIBRARY

Illustrated Per Volume \$1.25

FIRST SERIES

A MISSING MILLION or *The Adventures of Louis Belgrave*

A MILLIONAIRE AT SIXTEEN or *The Cruise of the Guardian*

A YOUNG KNIGHT ERRANT or *Cruising in the West Indies*

STRANGE SIGHTS ABROAD or *A Voyage in European Waters*

SECOND SERIES

THE AMERICAN BOYS AFLOAT or *Cruising in the Orient*

THE YOUNG NAVIGATORS or *The Foreign Cruise of the Maud*

UP AND DOWN THE NILE or *Young Adventurers in Africa*

ASIATIC BREEZES or *Students on the Wing* (in press)

"The bare announcement of a new series of books by Oliver Optic will delight boys all over the country. When they farther learn that their favorite author proposes to 'personally conduct' his army of readers on a grand tour of the world, there will be a terrible scramble for excursion tickets — that is, the opening volume of the 'Globe Trotting Series.' Of one thing the boys may be dead sure, it will be no tame, humdrum journey, for Oliver Optic does not believe that fun and excitement are injurious to boys, but, on the contrary, if of the right kind he thinks it does them good. Louis Belgrave is a fortunate lad, because, at the age of sixteen, he was the possessor of a cool million of dollars. No one, not even a young boy, can travel without money, as our author well knows, therefore he at once provided a liberal supply. Louis is a fine young fellow with good principles and honor, so he can be trusted to spend his million wisely. But he does not have entirely smooth sailing. In the first place he has a rascally step-father whom he had to subjugate, a dear mother to protect and care for, and the missing million to find before he could commence his delightful travels. They are all accomplished at last, and there was plenty of excitement and brave exploits in the doing of them, as the boy readers will find. The cover design shows many things — a globe, the Eiffel tower, mountains, seas, rivers, castles and other things Louis will see on his travels. — *Current Reviews*."

LEE AND SHEPARD Publishers Boston

ARMY AND NAVY STORIES.

Six Volumes. Illustrated. Per vol., \$1.25.

1. **THE SOLDIER BOY;**

Or, Tom Somers in the Army.

2. **THE SAILOR BOY;**

Or, Jack Somers in the Navy.

3. **THE YOUNG LIEUTENANT;**

Or, Adventures of an Army Officer

4. **THE YANKEE MIDDY;**

Or, Adventures of a Navy Officer.

5. **FIGHTING JOE;**

Or, The Fortunes of a Staff Officer

6. **BRAVE OLD SALT;**

Or, Life on the Quarter-Deck.

This series of six volumes recounts the adventures of two brothers, Tom and Jack Somers, one in the army, the other in the navy, in the great civil war. The romantic narratives of the fortunes and exploits of the brothers are thrilling in the extreme. Historical accuracy in the recital of the great events of that period is strictly followed, and the result is not only a library of entertaining volumes, but also the best history of the civil war for young people ever written.

YOUNG AMERICA ABROAD.

FIRST SERIES.

A Library of Travel and Adventure in Foreign Lands. 16mo.
Illustrated by Nast, Stevens, Perkins, and others.
Per volume, \$1.25.

1. **OUTWARD BOUND ;**
Or, Young America Afloat.
 2. **SHAMROCK AND THISTLE ;**
Or, Young America in Ireland and Scotland.
 3. **RED CROSS ;**
Or, Young America in England and Wales.
 4. **DIKES AND DITCHES ;**
Or, Young America in Holland and Belgium.
 5. **PALACE AND COTTAGE ;**
Or, Young America in France and Switzerland.
 6. **DOWN THE RHINE ;**
Or, Young America in Germany.
-

The story from its inception and through the twelve volumes (see *Second Series*), is a bewitching one, while the information imparted, concerning the countries of Europe and the isles of the sea, is not only correct in every particular, but is told in a captivating style. "Oliver Optic" will continue to be the boy's friend, and his pleasant books will continue to be read by thousands of American boys. What a fine holiday present either or both series of "Young America Abroad" would be for a young friend ! It would make a little library highly prized by the recipient, and would not be an expensive one. — *Providence Press.*

YOUNG AMERICA ABROAD.

SECOND SERIES.

**A Library of Travel and Adventure in Foreign Lands. 16mo.
Illustrated by Nast, Stevens, Perkins, and others.
Per volume, \$1.25.**

1. **UP THE BALTIC ;**
Or, Young America in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark.
 2. **NORTHERN LANDS ;**
Or, Young America in Russia and Prussia.
 3. **CROSS AND CRESCENT ;**
Or, Young America in Turkey and Greece.
 4. **SUNNY SHORES ;**
Or, Young America in Italy and Austria.
 5. **VINE AND OLIVE ;**
Or, Young America in Spain and Portugal.
 6. **ISLES OF THE SEA ;**
Or, Young America Homeward Bound.
-

“ Oliver Optic ” is a *nom de plume* that is known and loved by almost every boy of intelligence in the land. We have seen a highly intellectual and world-weary man, a cynic whose heart was somewhat imbittered by its large experience of human nature, take up one of Oliver Optic's books and read it at a sitting, neglecting his work in yielding to the fascination of the pages. When a mature and exceedingly well-informed mind, long despoiled of all its freshness, can thus find pleasure in a book for boys, no additional words of recommendation are needed. — *Sunday Times*.





